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MY LITTLE GIRL.

MY LITTLE GIRL.

A Novel.

BY THE AUTHORS OF

“READY-MONEY MORTIBOY.”

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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MY LITTLE GIRL.

BOOK I.—IN THE ISLAND.

CHAPTER I.



IN the Great Stormy Ocean —that part of it which is bounded by the Bay of Bengal on the west, and the coast of Mexico on the east (or thereabouts) — lies the island which

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Gen. R. 13 Mar '52 Chislett = 3 v.

the French, when they had it, called Ile des Palmistes, but which the English, on taking it at the beginning of this century, patriotically named after their great and good Regent, Prince George. The geography books call it Prince George's Island still, but no one out of England knows it by any other name than the Ile des Palmistes; and all English people, with the exception of the Colonial Office, know it by the name of Palmiste Island. It lies, in its rounded and graceful curves, like a maiden at rest—within a silver ring of surf, breaking over the coral reef, in latitude 18° S.—a latitude which I take to be the most delightful in the world, especially in a country where you can get highlands to live in, and a constant sea breeze to fan you. In Palmiste Island the sea breeze blows all the year round—sometimes giving way to a warm west wind, which comes from the neighbouring continent, and sometimes lashing itself to fury, no one knows why, and performing prodigies as a hurricane. It is bad at these times to be at sea, because all the ships go down. But it is perhaps worse to be on shore; for there the roads are mere rushing rivers, down which the wayfarer is hurried by the flood to meet an untimely fate, the gardens are stormy lakes, trees are blown about

like leaves, roofs of houses are lifted like sheets of paper; and men, if they are so unlucky as not to get shelter, are sometimes taken up towards Heaven, like Elijah—only, unlike the prophet, they generally come down again with the breakage of a good many legs, arms, ribs, and whatever bones happen to be most easily fractured. If the hurricane lasts long enough, the people, shut in their houses, are starved for want of provisions; and while it blows there is no means of cooking what they have. It has its advantages; for, after it is over, all the planters who were shaky before take the earliest opportunity of going through the form of bankruptcy, and excite universal commiseration for their hard fate, as they enlarge on the thousands of pounds' worth of canes or coffee that the hurricane has destroyed. Once clear of debt, they go on again with light hearts and renewed hope. By some curious inversion of the laws of political and social economy, very few, either debtors or creditors, unless they are English, seem the worse for their calamities. I have some idea, though not in this place, of putting forth a treatise on this important subject from a novel and tropical point of view. My readers will perhaps bear this in mind, and buy me, when I do appear, on the Northern and Temperate Zone System.

After the hurricane, the papers—there are six daily organs of opinion in the island: two on straw paper, two on a peculiar fabric something stiffer than tissue, and something coarser than homespun, and two on real paper—live for a fortnight at least on the correspondence which pours in. An “Occasional Correspondent” writes to detail the effects in his town, an important centre of at least three hundred people; a “Special” narrates the effects in the adjoining hamlet, half a mile removed; “Our Own” writes from the other end of the island, fully thirty miles away: they all sign their names, and run up to town the next day to receive the congratulations of their friends. They arrive with folded arms and brows knit. This illustrates the majesty of literature, since even these small dallyings with the muse produce such mighty throes of the mental system. And in a month all is repaired: the fields move again with the yellow-green canes, the dark coffee bushes blacken the hillsides, the roofs are all put on brand-new, the bankrupts have got fresh estates, or retain their old ones through the clemency of their creditors, and all is as it was. And in the Ile des Palmistes nothing changes but the men.

These are a heterogeneous race. They lie like a parti-coloured pyramid, the single stone at the

top representing his Excellency the Governor. The lowest stratum is composed of Coolies. These excellent beasts of burden supply the place of the old slaves. I do not think they are exactly kidnapped; but I believe it is demonstrable that very few of them have distinct ideas of their future when they embark on board the emigrant ship off Calcutta or Madras. On the other hand, their condition is certainly improved by the step. They get better wages and a larger access to drink; they do not work very hard; they are well fed; and if they are beaten with sticks, they may, if they like, have up their employer for assault. To be beaten with sticks carries, however, no sense of personal degradation with it, and generally hurts little, much less than the docking of wages, which is the only alternative. Consequently, despite laws and fines, old Father Stick, the first lawgiver, still retains a certain amount of authority. Then, again, their children can go to school, if there happens to be a school near; and when they are taught to write, come in handy at forging leaves of absence, passes, and such-like small helps to making life pleasant. At least once in six months, too, a missionary comes their way, and beguiles the time for half an hour after sundown by telling them they are going to that

place where they will find all their good resolutions. This raises an animated discussion for the evening, and helps to fill up the missionary's trimestrial letter. He writes this the next morning, after a comfortable dinner at the planter's house, with half a dozen cigars, and two or three goes of brandy and soda. The English collector of those stray shillings which go to make up the million a year spent in this noble work may read the half-hour described as follows:—
“Tuesday. Rose half an hour before dawn. Thought of Zech. li. 32. Rode, on my journeying, through the gigantic forest to the estate of Fontainebleau. Having obtained permission to preach the Word, spent a long time in deeply interesting conversation with the labourers in the village. All were eager to learn. Alamoodie, an aged Tamul man of sixty-five, was particularly anxious to hear the good tidings. And I was greatly pleased with the intelligent look of Mounia and Cassis, two young Indian women of about sixteen. I lent them a few tracts, and they laughed, putting their fingers in their mouths in the artless Indian manner. They cannot read, but others can read to them. In the evening, news came that the husband of Mounia was beating her for some alleged misconduct. How sweet it is to sow the seed!

Alamoodee, poor fellow, was brought in next morning on a charge of drunkenness; but dismissed with a fine and caution. I have reason to believe it was a conspiracy. The hard toils of the humble missionary have often no reward but hope."

The next stratum on our pyramid is coal-black. This is composed of all the negroes now left alive. Thirty-six years ago they were emancipated—a hundred thousand, of all ages. There are now about ten thousand. For, receiving their freedom with a joy which argued well for the future, as their admirers said, they proceeded to make a solemn covenant and agreement—not on paper, for they had none, and could not write; nor by special Parliament, for they never met; nor by mutual exhortation, for they never talked about it—but by that more certain method, the silent consent of the nation, the inarticulate vox populi. They agreed, one with the other, that they would never do any more work at all. And they never have done any. They have kept this resolution with the unbending obstinacy of the medical student who promised his aunt that he would lay aside his studies on the Sabbath. It has been a pleasant time with them; but somehow they have not prospered. They are dying out.

They live in little patches of garden, where they plant potatoes and lettuces, bananas, beans, and such things as grow by themselves and cost little trouble. What they cannot eat themselves, they sell for rice and rum. When they desire to make a feast, the nearest planter's poultry yard supplies the materials. They smoke their pipes in great peace, while the vertical sun strikes upon their roofless hats and penetrates pleasantly through the woolly protection of nature; they talk but little, and then of soothing subjects, such as the cheapness of rum, the excellence of their bananas, and their own amazing sagacity; and they laugh on small provocation, seeing great jokes and effects of humour when graver men look on with a smile. Sometimes they call themselves—all out of the gaiety of their hearts—carpenters, and, if you trust them, will build you a house whose windows are of unequal height and differing dimensions. They laugh when you point out this incongruity of things; and if you foolishly get into a rage, they only laugh the more—but at a distance. When they marry, they buy a large mosquito curtain as a proof of respectability. And their highest ambition is to have a piano.

Their wives and daughters love to go to church in white kid gloves, and a parasol.

Their husbands follow, walking behind in bare feet, battered straw hats, and blue stuff coats. Or, if they are richer, they have a black coat and blue stuff trousers. The ladies are mightily devout, and go through the external part of religion with great fervency. The men kneel down, and continue kneeling, with what is called the sweet, sad intelligence of the African race, till they catch the eye of a friend; then you may see two frames convulsed with a mighty struggle. Finally, quite overcome, they go out into the churchyard, and laugh on a tombstone till the service is over—taking turns to laugh at each other, like an Aristophanic chorus.

By degrees they get old: their wool becomes gray; the fine calf which once adorned that part of the leg with us called shin, shrinks and shrivels; the heel projects another two inches or so behind, the frame gets bent—but the man is the same. He does not know that he is old; he does not know how long he has lived, or how long men usually live. Presently, to his utter amazement, he positively dies; and thinks himself cut off prematurely, although he has numbered eighty summers. Certainly he has had no winters, because there is no winter there.

The best of them go fishing, and are very handy with their boats. Some few have been

pushed on in the world; but their patrons generally drop them, on account of defects which make them a little lower than those angels we English once took the race to be. The half-educated fellows are very bad specimens indeed. A hog in black clothes, a monkey with a book before him, would be fair types of their morals and philosophy. As a rule, they drink themselves to death; and as there are, fortunately, but few of them, they hardly count.

Let us get a step higher. The next stratum is the oddest of all: it is the Chinese layer. I have the greatest liking for this folk. There is a profundity, coupled with cynicism, in their look that few English philosophers possess. They seldom laugh, they despise all people but themselves, they make money diligently, live laboriously, fare badly, drink little, are clever artizans, can be relied upon in matters of work; and, with all these virtues, are so clogged and burdened with vice that they cannot rise. To smoke opium, to gamble all day, and to do one or two other things that western civilization denounces, form their ideal heaven. They are convivial, too. Their gravity is the result of education, not of nature; it is grafted—not indigenous. Witness the air of suppressed fun, inseparable from the nature of the action, with which two of them

carry a pig between them on a pole, or attend a pork-devouring religious ceremony, or let off crackers at the funeral of a friend, or sell you a box of sardines. And, more remarkable still, they are all alike. I do not know how they get over the possible complications that might be caused by this circumstance. I suppose care is taken so far as the rights of property and the domestic relations are concerned. At least, I never heard but once of any case in which the national likeness was taken advantage of. This was when Ah-Kang—I knew him well: a good fellow, but deficient in the finer shades of moral principle—going into the shop of Kong-Fow, found his poor friend lying dead behind his own counter. He thereupon conceived the brilliant notion of burying him in the garden, and taking his place. This plan he carried into effect, and for three months drove a good trade—his friend's name and titles, painted by an imperfectly educated Creole, being all the time on the door-post as follows:—

MR KONGFOW ESQU
IRE LICENS'D DEE
LER IN TOBAC
CO RETAILER
OF SPIRRUTS

N.B.—DAY AND MARTIN'S BEST BLACKING.

Then he was found out. I forget how.

Another step. We are among the mulattoes. I suppose this is the most intelligent class in the community, because they are always saying so. For the same reason, they are the most truthful, the least addicted to the ordinary frailties and backslidings of human nature, the most religious, the most trustworthy, the most enterprising, the most polished, and the bravest.

That no one else says so is a clear proof of the malignity of other people. Scandal hints that they hate their fathers for being white, and despise their mothers for being black: their enemies maintain that they have the vices of both races, and the virtues of neither; and, though they have barristers, physicians, and lawyers of their own, assert that their science is worthless, their eloquence froth, and their law chicanery. When all is told, I dare say, if they could forget their black blood, they would not be a bad set. The thing that rankles in their bosoms, the injustice that sets their blood aglow, is that white people, who shake hands with them on the Exchange, and meet them on terms of equality in the courts of law, will neither enter their houses nor sit at meat with them, nor introduce them to their wives. The law, which formerly forbade them to wear boots, has given them all the rights

of civic equality; but no law can remove the prejudices of caste. Are they worse off than we in Europe? Are there not houses where we, who grace the district of W.C., enter only on a kind of sufferance? Does not the Faubourg St. Germain still exist, eighty years after the Revolution? Would the Duke of St. Smithfield, whose grandfather began life as a journeyman baker, and ended as an earl, sully his blue blood by letting his fair daughter marry me—me, the author? And are we, therefore, dear inhabitants of Bloomsbury, to eat out our hearts in malice?

.Our pyramid narrows. Next we come to the planters and the merchants—the English and the French. With the merchants we have nothing to do. Let me try to show you a planter's house. But first, for I am tired of my pyramid, let me clear it off, and have done with it. The next stratum is the governing body—the officers sent out by England. Palmiste Island is a Crown colony. Therefore, the officers are generally men of good family, if of small means. Their posts do not enable them, as a rule, to save much. But they save a little; and when the time comes for retiring, they have something more than their pension to fall back upon. They are not usually a remarkably brilliant set of men; but they are generally well

bred, and possessed of tact. The Government cart goes on smoothly enough. There are few real grievances, and there would be no imaginary ones were it not for the daily papers. The judges are just; the Crown law officers have sufficient ability; the bishop is pious and bland; the Colonial Secretary is cautious: things get put by for a more favourable opportunity, and then right themselves. And the top storey, the apex, the crown of the building, his Excellency the Governor-General of Prince George's Island and its dependencies, gives dinners to the élite, balls to society in general, receives whom the Colonial Secretary sends to him, and composes long despatches recommending reforms which will make the colony a Paradise. He is obliged to write them, to show his zeal; though it must be a fearful bore. And, when they come home, some young clerk in the Colonial Office, who knows as much of Palmiste as of Timbuctoo, annotates the laboured thoughts of the experienced statesman, and snubs him. This done, according to rule, the despatches are put in a book, and carefully bound up, to be preserved for ever. There are now so many of these hapless children of thought, smothered as soon as born, and kept as calf-bound mummies in Downing-street, that a few years since they

were compelled to move them all to the cellars. Their weight was pressing out and crushing down the walls, and it was feared that their presence, longer continued, might possibly result in the demolition of the whole fabric. Shades of departed Governors, pensionless wanderers by Brighton sands, consider with gratitude the Nemesis that waits on the contempt of your labours!





CHAPTER II.

THE estate I am going to take you to is called Fontainebleau. All the estates in the Ile des Palmistes have these pretty French names. One is called Mon Songe, another Mon Rêve. There is a Trianon, a St. Cloud, a Sorèze, an Amboise, a Chenonceux; there are Beau Plan, Belle Vue, Riche en Eaux, Belle Rivière, Savanne; there are Lucie, Eugénie, Adrienne, and Louise. All the poetry in the heart of the owner is lavished on the name of his estate. "All the same," as a wandering jockey once observed to me, "as the owners of the 'orses in the Derby"—a remark which seems to throw a new and very pretty light upon horse-racing. 27

Fontainebleau lay on the confines of the great forest that filled the centre of the island. On

one side rose hills—not the round, indolent hills of England; but sharp, eager, ambitious little mountains, scarped with precipices fifty and a hundred feet high, jagged with peaks and cut with passes, for all the world like a row of Alps. These pretentious elevations tower upwards at least five hundred feet, and are covered with wood, except in small spaces cleared for coffee. They look down upon the broad fields of Fontainebleau. Planted with canes, the acres stretch down the sloping land towards the sea, kindly Mother Earth rounding, as it were, into a breast of fertility. As the sun takes his swift, long course midway in the heavens, the yellow-green crops wear a thousand different shades of light—now as the wind turns up the dark hidden side of the leaf; now as it flutters out the bright upper part; now when the cane is in flower, when it blows about the feathery beauty like the trappings of a helmet; or now, when the clouds fly here and there in dark shadows along the glorious colours; and always the sea breeze raises the gentle waves of the field, like the sweet unrest of a sea which never knows a storm.

An English corn field, when the sun shines upon it, is a sight to admire; but an estate planted with canes, in all their richness of colour and beauty of form, is one to fill the eye with those

tears which rise at the contemplation of nature at its best—tears from no divine despair, but perhaps from a sense of the unfitness of man for the earth. In the cities it is not felt; but in the lonely corners of the world, in those tiny spots of the ocean where God's finger seems to have lingered longest, delicately shaping sweet river-courses, shady glens, ravines, cascades, and quaint mountain tops, where nature is most productive and man most out of sight, the heart is saddened, the eyes dimmed.

Fontainebleau was a very quiet place, and a lonely. To north and east lay the great, silent forest. To south only it opened out; and standing in the road one could see ten miles of land—ten miles, rather, of waving canes—before the ocean seemed to rise up like a wall, and bar the prospect. Looking over the sailless sea—for no ships ever came that way—the misanthrope might derive a sense of freedom from feeling that, far and wide, no land interposed between the headland beneath him and the barren peaks of the Antarctic shores, far to the south. But the broad fields looked hot, thirsty, and parched. It was better to turn northwards, and climbing over the wall which kept out the deer, and was a nightly gymnasium for the monkeys, dive into the glades and recesses of the forest.

I suppose it would have been difficult to lose oneself in it. One might, perhaps, wander about in it for a few days; but sooner or later the end of it must have been reached. It is not very large—ten miles one way, by perhaps thirty another. There are few paths in it; but a man has only to keep going by the sun to arrive somewhere near his destination. And then there are no perils in it. Nothing more harmful lurks in its recesses than the monkey, a gigantic beast—species, say, ourang-outang—of at least a foot and a half high. There are also deer, the little bristly jungle pig, and perhaps a wild cat or two—that is, a tame cat gone wild; not a panther or a leopard, or anything of that nature, understand. There was a tiger. He got away from a menagerie, and betook himself to the woods. Of his end there are two legends. For some maintain that he died of indigestion, having eaten an old negro who disagreed with him; others, with greater plausibility, affirm that his nature has been changed—*animum cum cælo, mutavit*—that he has been distinctly visible in the gray of the morning, filing his teeth in boulders, and that he lives retired in the mountains—a vegetarian, shunning the sight of man. And this they allege as a proof of the mildness and placability

induced by the climate of Palmiste Island. There was once, also, a crocodile. He, too, escaped, being yet quite young, and unfortunately mistook a water-pipe for a cavern or retreat made specially for his behoof. There, many weeks afterwards, he was discovered, choked—a gruesome body; and Englishmen must needs take consecutive sodas and b.'s as a corrective and preservative against any small matter of putrefaction that may have entered their bodies through incautiously drinking the water unmixed—a thing quite improbable, on the face of it, and entirely contrary to their known habits. Lastly, there was once found—as the ballads say, I do not lie—*half a snake*, the tail half. How it got there, where the other half was, whether he had a sister or a brother, a father or a mother, or a dearer and nearer one still, in the jungle, was never ascertained. And in all the annals of Palmiste, no other snake, crocodile, or tiger was ever found in the whole island.

As a set-off against this immunity from danger, the forest is almost silent and inexpressibly dreary. Save here and there the faint chatter of a monkey, or the occasional cry of a coq-de-bois, the silence is profound and oppressive. Few birds are there in Palmiste—very few in the forest. They have two natural

enemies: monkeys and hurricanes. The former take down their nests and destroy their eggs—all out of pure mischief; and the latter blow their nests and eggs and all into the sea.

But besides the mournfulness of its silence, the mere aspect of the forest saddens if you stay in it too long. For a bright, cheery, glorious wood, where you may picnic, wander, or build castles of future greatness, I prefer the New Forest; for a poetical, dreamy place, where you may make poetry and chansons de geste, that of Fontainebleau—in France, I mean; for a sweet-smelling, sentimental wood, a place where one can walk with one's love, and fall into tender talk of eternity and heaven, and all sweet hopes and confiding trusts, I prefer a pine forest on the lower slopes of a Tyrolese Alp. But for a place where death and decay stare you in the face—where, if you stay your steps, you fall presently to musing on a mis-spent life, go to the forest in the centre of Palmiste. There, when you mark the giant creeper crushing the life out of some great monarch of the wood, curling round him like the prieve, with its countless arms, think of evil habits, and remind yourself how man never shakes them off, and how the soul is choked with them. Then remember your own, and abandon hope. Or

when you see the dense mass of trees—so thick that they press against one another, so close together that they never dream of such a thing as leaves till they are thirty or forty feet high—think of men in great cities, how thick they are, and how they fight for life, and give up all prospect of aught but toil, and labour, and oblivion, till the end comes. Presently you will come—it lies in your path—upon a large pillow-like mass of green, soft moss; put your foot upon it—it sinks through to the hip. This was once a great tree. It lies where it has fallen; its wood is rotten and wasted; no one ever noticed its beauty, and it served no purpose in life or in death. Then draw your moral, sitting in the shade.

I extract most of this description from a discourse I once pronounced in my friend Venn's rooms. He maintains that such a forest as I have described would affect him with a lively joy; and points out how all that I have named would but serve to raise his spirits and fill him with gratitude and hope. Nature can be read in two ways. In all her moods there are joy and hope, and in all there are mockery and despair. I tell of the forest as it affected me.

There are two or three little watercourses running out of the forest through the estate,

which the simple islanders call rivers. These bubbling streams speedily cut out little ravines for themselves, and go brawling about among the boulders at the bottom as if most important business, not to be deferred a moment, hurried them down. Here and there they disappear, and you may hear them grumbling below. When they emerge, it is to make a great leap, as if for joy, into a basin where the water runs round and round in a mighty hurry to get away. These ravines are dark and narrow: the steep, sloping banks crowded with trees and brambles. Rich and rare ferns lurk under the shadows orchids almost priceless are found in the branches; and you never by any chance meet any one if you care to wander down the ravine, except perhaps a bevy of Indian damsels with their hair down, performing their ablutions, like Bathsheba of old, in the open.

By one of these rivers stands the residence of Fontainebleau. It is a large, deeply verandahed wooden house, with wooden tiles for roof, all on one floor. All the rooms open into each other, and on the verandah. They are furnished with a curious mixture of things costly and things rude. There is a rough, common table side by side with chairs that might do duty in Belgravia. A pianoforte which has never been tuned, and

never been opened for no one knows how many years, is in one corner, littered with powder-flasks and shooting gear; a tall bookcase, filled with volumes whose bindings have once been splendid, but which are now dropping off the books from damp; a few pictures, a great pile of newspapers, and a general air of comfort and negligence, mark a drawing-room where there has been no lady for many years. The dining-room is behind: it has a great table and a side-board, both of which were once, it may be presumed, new, but which are now mere monuments of neglected mahogany. It has no other furniture, because the chairs of the house have generally succumbed to time the destroyer; and now at dinner time they take them out of the drawing-room, and bring them back after dinner. Not that they are ever wanted, for easy chairs stand on the verandah, and cigars are best smoked in the cool night air.

At the back of the house, outside, stands the kitchen of the Indian cook—a place whence come savoury things; but within which no one was ever known to penetrate, except one man. He came out with pale face and trembling limbs. They gave him brandy. Presently he recovered. But he never afterwards was known to touch pudding in Palmiste. I believe, too, that he

died young. And the bed-rooms, each furnished with gay little iron bedsteads and mosquito curtains, are, like the sitting-rooms, made to open on the verandah. There are not many of these inhabited now; for the gay days of Fontainebleau are over, and the gray-haired man who lives there now has little companionship save that of his son and his nephew. The society of the town twenty-five miles away has nothing to do with him. He is out of it now, and forgotten; save once or twice a year, when at some great hunting party in the forest he appears, pale and melancholy; and old men whisper that poor George Durnford is the ghost of himself. Time was, they tell you, when George was the soul of the island. The ex-cavalry officer, who got into such a devil of a mess with his colonel, and had to sell out; who came to Palmiste twenty years ago, and bought Fontainebleau; who married Adrienne—la belle Adrienne—niece and ward of Henri de Rosnay; who led the life of the place, and was foremost in everything social and genial—can it be the same person?

More of him hereafter. Let me finish with the house.

About the verandah, or in the dining-room, or about the kitchen, are the boys—Indians—who belong to the service of the house. There are

some half-dozen of them, dressed in a sort of tight cotton jacket, with little caps, looking, as they are, full of intelligence and life. These, with the bright, fearless look in the eyes, and the slender grace of the limbs, vanish when the boy passes the threshold of manhood; and he becomes heavy, sluggish, and sensual. At present, however, the boys are from eight to twelve years old, and make the best servants in the world. Mendacious they are, it is true, and as destructive as monkeys; but if one is going to be thrashed for breaking a glass, it is just as well to say that another did it. You get no more, if you are found out. Logically, and with respect to immediate results, they are quite right. It has not yet entered into the heads of the residents of Palmiste that they might Christianize their servants. Certainly, the specimens turned out by the missionaries are not encouraging. The converted Hindoo is, in most cases, precisely the kind of man that *no one* will employ. And though things may be better in those districts of Southern India which have been largely Christianized, I think that the less said about missionary labour among the Indians the better.

At the side of the house stretches its great garden, filled with all sorts of English vegetables, and all kinds of tropical fruits. Here

are rows of pines which Covent-garden cannot hope to equal. There are too many for eating, and they are rotting on the stalk. Here is an orchard of letchi trees, the fruit that Warren Hastings tried to acclimatize in England, but failed. I would he had succeeded. Here are mangoes, with vanilla trained upon the trees. Here are custard apples, oranges, citrons, and guavas. Here, too, are strawberries, peaches, mulberries, and grapes. You may look, however, in vain for apples, pears, and such things. These grow not in Palmiste; and Englishmen, eating fruits more delicious far than these, grumble that they cannot get a pear, and would almost go back to England to get a plum.

In front of the house lies its lawn—a broad, rolling piece of ground, set with flower beds, mostly neglected, and planted round with rose trees. Side by side with English flowers are others which remind you of greenhouses, Kew Gardens, and the Crystal Palace. They are not, however, so sweet as our own; and yonder bed of mignonette fills the air with a perfume far more delicate than any of the heavy laden tropical plants. Here is a sensitive plant. Touch it: all the leaflets near your finger close, and shrink together in a kind of fear. Here is a gorgeous *dracæna*. You remember one like it

in the Palm House. Here is a honeysuckle climbing up the wall of the house; and here, in heavy masses over the verandah, are creepers which if left unchecked would climb over and embrace the whole house, and tear all down together.

My picture of still life must finish. Throw into the background a row of slender palms; put in, if you can, that glimpse to the right of a miniature gorge, some fifty feet deep; mark its tree ferns, tall and symmetrical, with their circled glory of leaves; throw in for light, the soft, white rays of a sun that wants yet half an hour of setting; let your air be warm and mild; let a breeze, cool and crisp, from the south-east, blow through the branches; while, from the camp of the Indians, not far away, imagine—for you cannot paint it—a confused murmur of tongues, cries of children, an occasional quarrel among the women, the monotonous beat of the tum-tum, and the drone of the Indian storyteller. Then try to fancy that you have lived in all this so long that Europe with its noisy politics, and England with its fierce battle for life, and London with its fevered pleasures and bitter sorrows, seem all dreams of a former existence; that the soft lassitude of the climate has eaten into your very marrow, and that you no longer

care to think, or to work, or to do anything violent or in a hurry; that your chief pleasure is to sit at early dawn on the verandah, with a cigar, and see the day rise over the hills; or, at evening, watching the southern cross, and letting your thoughts roam here and there unchecked; your chief hope—save at moments when a sickness for home comes on you, and a yearning for the life and vigour of England—always to go on like this: to have no sickness, to feel no sorrows, to be tormented by no sympathy, to make no alteration or improvement, to dream life away, to eat the lotos day by day, in a land where it is, indeed, always afternoon.





CHAPTER III.



COME back with me ten years before my tale begins. We are still at Fontainebleau. It is a dark, dreary night in January—cold, though it is the middle of the hot season. A fierce gale, to which the wind

blowing about the trees is a sort of fringe or outside robe, is raging somewhere at sea. The rain falls at intervals in a continuous sheet of water; doors and windows are closed; and George Durnford is sitting alone in his dining-room, with an untasted bottle of claret before him, and a bitter sorrow at his heart. That morning he had followed to the grave the wife who but two days ago was alive and well. From a room close by comes the prattle of two children, in bed, but not yet asleep. To them the dismal ceremony of the morning was a pageant which conveyed no meaning. One of them has lost his mother; and he sits now on his little white bed, a great-eyed, fair-haired, solemn boy of two, with an uneasy sense of something wrong, and a growing wonder that the familiar hands do not come to smoothe his sheets, and the familiar lips to kiss his good night. The other—a year or two older, with blacker hair and darker complexion—in the opposite bed, is singing and laughing, regardless of the nurse's injunction to make no noise and go to sleep. He is cousin Phil. And the little two-year-old is Arthur Durnford.

The baby voices do not rouse the lonely mourner in the room outside them. He sits musing on his brief three years of love and hap-

piness; on the dreary scene of the stormy morning's funeral; of death and of sorrows that come to mar the brightest promise. He thinks of the day when he brought home his young bride, flushed with joy and hope; and of her cold waxen features when he took the last look at the fair face that had nestled at his heart. The hope and vigour of life seem suddenly taken out of him, and he shudders as he remembers the long years to come—perhaps thirty or forty—alone in misery. For all sorrow seems to be endless when it begins; and, when the pain dies away into a sad regret, its very poignancy is remembered as a kind of evil dream.

The storm outside increases. Roused by the crash of thunder, he raises his head; and then, for the first time, he sees that he is not alone.

How long she has been sitting there, when she came in, and how, he knows not. She is a young mulatto woman, not darker than many a black-haired woman of Provence, apparently about twenty years of age. Her jet black hair is rolled up in a wavy mass. She holds her hat in her hand. Her dress is wet and draggled, but her hands are not rough. In her face, as she gazes steadfastly on Durnford, there is a look of mingled triumph and pity.

He starts with surprise.

"Marie!—why do you come here? I thought you were in England."

She does not answer for a while, and then begins in a sort of low, measured way—speaking English fluently, but with something of a foreign accent.

"Why do I come to-night, George Durnford? I think I came to triumph over your sorrow, because I heard about it in the town when I landed yesterday. But I heard things as I came along which forbid me to triumph any longer. Why should I triumph? You, who loved me once, would love me again if I chose. You, who deserted me for that good, dead girl—you see, George, I can be just—would, if I chose, take me again to be your plaything."

"Never," said Durnford. "Woman, can you not understand that a man can cease to do evil?"

"But," she went on, as if he had not spoken, "I do not choose. I will be no man's plaything. You taught me something, George. You taught me that a woman, to be what a woman should be, must learn many things. We, the daughters of a despised race, are good enough to be the mistress of an hour, but not good enough to be the companions of a life. We have our year of fondness, and think, poor fools, it will last for

ever. We have but one thing to give you—our love. You take it, and trample on it. We have nothing but ourselves. That is yours; and when you are tired of the toy, you throw it away in the dirt. As I am only one of the many—only a mulatto girl—I ought not to complain. It has been my fate, and I accept it. Besides, you are a gentleman. Not every girl gets an Englishman for a lover. You were kind to me; you put ideas into my head; you taught me things; you made me feel, without meaning it, how great a gulf there is between your race and mine; and you showed me how to pass the gulf. You did more—not as a salve for your own conscience, because I suppose your conscience never pricked you about it; nor as a bribe for me to go away and never trouble you again—you gave me money on that day—the day before you married—when you bade me farewell. I used the money well, George. Even you will confess I used it well. I have been to your great city—your big, cold, dreary London. I put myself to school there. I have learned all that a woman should learn, and more. Shall I play to you? Shall I sing to you? Shall I prove to you that even your cast-off mistress can be, if she pleases, as perfect a lady as — No, George, I will make no comparison.

Adrienne, my mistress—my poor darling—whom I played with and loved, I shall never be like you!”

Durnford made an impatient gesture.

“I must say what I have to say. I want to say a good deal. Besides, it pleases me to talk. I have talked to no one since I left England, and you must listen. . Don’t think, to begin with, that I love you any more. The poor, ignorant creature that trusted you, and thought herself honoured by having your arm about her, is gone. George, she is dead. All that is left of her and her life is a memory and an experience. I remember, and I know. She could have done neither. She would have gone away, back to her own cousins—the swine who live in the huts by the seaside, and scramble once a week for the wretched fish that will keep them till another week. She would have married some black clown, as ignorant as herself, and far more brutal; and would have brought her children up like their father. George, where is my boy?”

Durnford pointed to the bed-room door.

She snatched a light, and came back directly with little Phil, still asleep, in her arms—kissing and crying over him like a madwoman.

“Oh! Phil, Phil—my darling, my darling!

Could I leave you all alone? Speak to your mother, my son—my son! Will you never know her? Will you never be proud of her, and cling to her, and be good to her?

The child opened his eyes, looked up sleepily, and then heavily turned his face from her, and was asleep again in a moment.

She took him back, and placed him again in his cot, and took the light, and looked long and steadfastly at the other. She returned, and sat down again, sighing deeply.

"Your child is mine, Marie," said Durnford. "What I swore to you then, I swear to you now. He will be brought up like the other, educated with him, and shall share with him."

"Will he never know the story of his birth?" asked the girl.

"It is my hope that he never will. He will be called—he is already called—my nephew. I told all to my wife. She had forgiven."

"When you die, will he, or will the other, have this estate?"

Durnford hesitated. At last, he looked steadily at her, and said—

"My lawful son will be my heir. What wealth I have shall be his. Your son will have a competence; but I will not—I cannot, Marie, defraud my heir of what is his."

Marie sat silent for a time.

Then she began to walk about the room.

"I am not myself to-night, George. I was angry as I walked here through the forest. I am only repentant now. The old love for my poor Adrienne drowns the resentment that filled my heart an hour ago. I came to upbraid you—I cannot. Her spirit is in this house. I felt her breath as I leaned over the face of her boy. I saw her face as I came in at the door. I feel her here now, George. If I think more of her, I shall see her. I *do* see her! She is here—before me. Adrienne"—she bent forward with streaming eyes and supplicating hands—"forgive me. Forgive the poor passionate girl that never did you any harm, but whose heart has been filled with bitterness against you. You did not wrong me, my poor dear; and as for him who did—here, in your presence, I forgive him. George, for three long years, far away from here, among strangers, I have had but one prayer every night. I have prayed that misery might fall on you and yours. Adrienne, Adrienne—speak to me, if you can. Give me some sign that my prayer was not answered. Let me go away at least forgiven."

As she spoke, the hurricane swept with all its fury against the house. The wind howled

like an accusing spirit. George rose from his chair, pale and trembling.

"Woman," he cried, "you are answered."

But as suddenly the wind dropped, and with one last effort blew back the shutter of the window. Durnford hurried to replace it; and with the driving rain that came in, like tears of wild repentance, a poor dying dove was blown through the window, straight to Marie's bosom.

"I am answered," she said, folding the creature in her hands.

Neither spoke. Presently Marie fell on her knees, with the dove in her hand, and prayed aloud. Great tears rolled down Durnford's face. When she had finished, he lifted up his voice and wept, saying—

"God have mercy upon me, a sinner."

* * * * *

It was midnight. Marie rose from her knees, another Magdalene.

"I must go," she said; "but first, George, aid me to carry out my plan of life. I am going back to London. I have got a great voice—a splendid voice, George—a voice that will bring me, they say, more money than I can spend. I shall save it for the boy. To make it useful, I must study and work. Let me have some more money. I don't think it

degrades me to ask it of you, does it? My real degradation no one knows, over there. You must give me money, George."

He told her how he would help her in England, and give her what he had. They were both very quiet and subdued.

"I have seen you," she said, "and I have not cursed you. But, 'ah! my heart misgives me. I came through the lonely forest to-night, and heard sounds that mean misfortune."

"Marie, it is superstition."

"Perhaps. I cannot help it. It is in my blood. And a voice whispered in my ear, as I came along, that I should have no joy with my boy; and that you would have no more pleasure in life; that my fortune was to come, but my misery and punishment with it. George, was it no bad omen that my child turned away his face from me? Is it good to come to a house of sudden death and mourning? Shall I begin the world afresh with a brighter spirit for this night of tears and repentance?"

"You are shaken. Stay to-night. Take the child to sleep with you. In the morning you can go, if you will."

"No—now, now," she said. "I cannot stay here. Take care of him, George—take care of him. Some day, perhaps——"

"You cannot go through the forest to-night."

"I must—I cannot stay here. Farewell, George. I think I shall never see you again. Pray God to forgive us both. I will pray every day. They say God hears if you go on praying. And write to me sometimes to tell me of the boy."

They stood one moment, face to face. George took her hand; and then their faces met. There was no passion now, in that last embrace. The memory of the wife came between them like a spirit. They kissed each other, like children, in token of forgiveness, and in self-abasement; and then, lifting the latch, Marie went out into the darkness, and disappeared.

George Durnford, lighting a cigar mechanically, went outside to the verandah. The Indian guardian, whose duty it was to make the rounds, and keep off nocturnal thieves, was coiled up in a corner, fast asleep. The storm had died away. A pure sky, bright with the southern constellations and with a clear half-moon, was overhead. George's eye fell on the cross of the south—that heavenly sign that once filled the sailors with hope. He felt the warm, soft air of the summer night. Sitting down, he presently fell asleep. When he awoke the day was breaking; the mill was lighted up; the day's work was begun; and

he pondered in his mind whether he had not dreamt it all.

Little Philip, coming to him at six o'clock, began to ask who had taken him out of bed. And lying on the floor George Durnford found a handkerchief with the name of Marie on it. Then he knew that he had not dreamed this thing. And he kept it in his heart.





CHAPTER IV.



M^R ALEXANDER MACINTYRE used to describe himself, as a dingy card on Mr. Durnford's table testified, as Professor of the Classics and Mathematics, Instructor in Foreign Languages, Fencing, Fortifi-

cation, Hindustani, and the Fine Arts. He was a most accomplished man. With the exception of the last-named department of learning—which I fancy he inserted rather with a view to the effect and roundness of the sentence than with any intention of instructing in the Fine Arts—he really knew and could teach the things he professed. He was not a Porson in Greek, but he made boys fairly good in Greek scholarship. He would not have become senior wrangler, but he knew a good lot of school mathematics. He could really fence; he could talk Italian, or French, or German, with equal fluency; and he could and did swear horribly in Hindustani. Finally, on occasion, he talked about Fortification as glibly as Captain Shandy.

This great luminary of science was engaged for some years as private tutor to the two boys at Fontainebleau. He used to ride over on a little pony from his house, some two miles off, and ride back again in the evening. Sometimes, when he stayed to dinner, Mr. Durnford would leave him on the verandah, smoking and sitting in friendly proximity to the brandy bottle. Then it was the delight of the two boys—for Mr. Durnford had got into a habit, of late years, of going to his own room about nine o'clock—to observe their revered instructor drink tumbler

after tumbler of brandy and water, getting more thirsty after each, and more rapid in his despatch of the next. At the opportune moment—that is to say, when he was not too far gone—they would emerge upon the scene, and engage him in talk. He would then make a laudable effort to give the conversation a philosophical and improving turn. Getting into difficulties, he would try to help himself out by another pull at the brandy; and when, as always happened, he got into fresh complications, he would fall back in his chair, and make use of a regular and invariable formula. He would say, quite clearly and distinctly—"I am a Master of Arts of the University of Aberdeen—I'm the MacIntyre!" Then he would become speechless; and the boys, with a huge delight, would carry him neck and heels to bed. In the morning he would rise at six, and emerge with unclouded brow. Perhaps, in the course of the day, he would find occasion for a few remarks on temperance, with an excursus on his own moderation in spirituous liquors.

He was a small, spare man, in glasses, with sandy hair, a pale face, and a red nose. He lived by himself, in a little house of three rooms, two miles down the road. He had no pupils except the two Durnfords, and at odd

moments an uneasy consciousness would seize him that when these went he would starve. Nor had he any friends to help him. The voice of rumour, which aggravates a man's vices and subtracts from his virtues, said that he went drunk to bed every night. As to his antecedents there were many reports. Some said that he had been in the army, but was cashiered for embezzlement while he was adjutant; others, that he had been a courier, a billiard marker, all sorts of things. Rumour lied, of course. He had been none of those things. He had, after a laborious and meritorious career at Aberdeen, "gone in" for Scotch mission work in Constantinople. Here he preached the Gospel to the Jews, till he preached his belief away. This becoming known to his employers, he was turned out with ignominy. Then he wandered about the Levant, living no one knew how. After a few years, he turned up again in England, and became a lecturer to some society. Difficulties about the money ensued, and Mr. MacIntyre once more left his native shores. This time he came to Palmiste, with a letter to Mr. Durnford, and set up as a public teacher of everything in the principal town. Troubles of all sorts fell upon him, and he removed to the other end of the island—partly

to escape them, and partly to coach Mr. Durnford's boys. He had a way of introducing remarks—which at first sight appeared to be of the profoundest wisdom, and took in the unwary—with a magisterial and Aberdonian "obsairve." He was sententious and deferent. He had no morals, no principles, no self-will, no self-control. All his better qualities were wrecked on the quicksand of drink; and of the hard-working, hopeful days of Aberdeen nothing was left but the knowledge he had acquired, and a habit of industry which never deserted him. He was not, it must be confessed, the best tutor possible for boys. But education in Palmiste is difficult.

Mr. Durnford liked to keep his boys at home. There was less harm to be learned there, at all events, than in the hot, unhealthy town where the college stood. And even Mr. MacIntyre could teach them mere book learning. So they stayed at home, and grew in years and stature.

In appearance they were as different as in manners. For Philip, the elder, was strong, sturdy, and overbearing. Arthur was slight, delicate, and yielding. If Philip wanted anything, he always had it. Philip, too, wanted everything. The best pony was his, the best

dogs, the best gun. He was the cleverer—the favourite with Mr. MacIntyre: sharp of tongue, and cool of temperament. But he was not popular. Arthur was. By his soft, feminine ways; by the gentle sympathy which he showed for all alike; by the kindly grace of his manner, which he inherited from his mother, he won affection where his cousin only gained fear. The children ran after him when he walked through the village; the women came to him to adjust their differences; the Indians, when they had a petition to offer or a point to gain, which was nearly every day, waited till they could get hold of the chota sahib—the little master. Philip, though he pretended to despise this popularity, was secretly annoyed at it. It rankled in his heart that he, for his part, commanded no man's affection. By degrees, too, as he grew up, he began to ask questions about himself. These his uncle put aside, quietly but firmly. And gradually a sort of feeling of inferiority took possession of him. There was something—what, he never guessed—that was not to be told him: something that had better not be spoken of, something that made him different from his cousin. It was the germ of what was to grow into a great tree—a tree whose fruit was poison, and

whose very shade was noxious. But at this time it only stimulated him. It made him more eager to surpass his cousin; threw him with fresh vigour into his studies; and urged him to practise more and more the arts which he thought would lead to success in life. These—for the boy's knowledge of life was very small—he imagined to be chiefly skill at shooting and riding. He did both splendidly. Arthur did both indifferently.

Mr. Durnford seemed to take but little notice of their progress. Still, from a word here and there, they knew that he watched them. Nor could Philip complain, when his uncle gave him the best horse and the costliest gun that could be got in the island, that he was overlooked. There were few times when the grave man conversed much with them. Sometimes, at breakfast—that meal which means, in a planter's house, an early dinner at half-past eleven, when the work of the day, which has gone on for five or six hours, is more than half over, which is followed by two or three hours of rest and lazy talk—he would relax, and tell them long stories of English life and youthful adventure, at which their faces were set aglow, and their hearts beating with excitement. Or he would set forth the perils of a young man's course; hiding little; letting them

know some of the temptations that lie in the way of life; telling them something of the battle that lay before them; and—for George Durnford was now a religious man—backing up his pictures with a homily on duty. Surely, there is but one thing needful to teach boys—to do their duty; and one thing above all to train in them, the power of will that will help them to do it. On Sunday mornings, they would read the service of the Church, the three together—Phil taking the first lesson, and Arthur the second. By this arrangement, the younger boy seemed to get all the teaching of Christ, and the elder all the passion and rebellious self-will of the Israelites.

Once a week or so they generally rode, the two boys together, but sometimes Mr. Durnford with them, to see Madeleine.

Madeleine, some three years younger than Arthur, was the one thing that kept the boys alive to a sense of the social side of life. She, like them, was motherless; and, like them, lived with her father, M. de Villeroy, on a sugar estate, his property. She was everybody's pet and play-thing—a bright little black-haired beauty, whose laughter kept the house gay, and whose wilful ways were law. M. de Villeroy was one of those grand Frenchmen—some day we shall see them

all in their proper place again—whose manners are the perfection of courtesy, and whose ideas chiefly date from a time when Louis the Sixteenth was king; or, to speak more truly, from a time when Francis the First was king. Not that his own birth dated from either of those reigns. He and his were colonists in Palmiste Island from very early in the last century. The Marshal de Villeroy he spoke of as his cousin. He had the right, if he wished, to call himself marquis. He had a profound contempt for roturiers, and held that gentleman was a name that belonged to him by Divine right; but he held, too, that the name involved duties—and truth, honour, and bravery were the three points of his creed. For Christianity, I fear that, like too many of his countrymen, he considered it as an admirable method of imparting notions of order to the vulgar; and though he would not openly scoff at it, yet, when alone with his friend Durnford, he would let fall such slight indications of a contemptuous toleration as almost justified the priests in calling him a Voltairean. Voltaire—or M. Arouet, as he preferred to call him—he always declared to be a man who had done an infinite amount of mischief; and he held all men of genius in equal dislike, from a persuasion that their mission in life was to prema-

turely popularize the ideas of the nobility. The Revolution, he would explain, was the work of men of genius. The ideas which they propagated had long been current among the more cultivated of the nobility. These, however, forbore to carry to their bitter end the logical consequences of their convictions. Nothing in social and political economy could be logical. All must be compromise. But what the Revolution took thirty years to achieve would, he maintained, have been accomplished by the liberality of the divinely appointed rulers of things in ten, without bloodshed.

"Obsairve," said Mr. MacIntyre, "Mirabeau was a gentleman."

To which M. de Villeroy replied that Mirabeau's life was fatal to any kind of purity of action; and that, despite any alleged instances to the contrary, great things could only be done by men of pure life.

We must not, however, waste time on M. de Villeroy. He disappears directly out of the story. But he was one of the few influences brought to bear upon the boys' daily life. Mr. Durnford, with his high standard of duty and Christian honour; M. de Villeroy, with *his* standard of a gentleman's ideal; Mr. MacIntyre, alternately presenting the example of a scholar

—various, if not profound—and the drunken, helpless helot; the ignorant, childish mass of Indians and blacks on the estate; and pretty little Madeleine, to keep them gentle, and give them that delicacy of feeling which only contact with the other sex can impart. Let us bear these things in mind, and remember in the story to come how ever so little an accident may mar the growth of the most promising tree.

The accident happened thus. Phil was now about fifteen—a strong, handsome boy, whose dark wavy hair and slightly olive skin were set off by a pair of bright black eyes and regular features, closely resembling those of Mr. Durnford. It was some little time, he could not himself say how it began, since the feeling had sprung up, that I have alluded to, of his own inferiority. As yet it was but an uneasy thought, sometimes dying away altogether, sometimes springing again full-grown into his brain. But it was there. He awoke this particular morning with it, and went out, in the early dawn, morose and sullen. Presently, when Arthur joined him, and they walked about with their arms round each other's necks in boyish fashion, the ghost vanished, and Phil became himself again. They got their ponies

saddled, drank their coffee, and rode off to meet the tutor.

Presently they came upon him, plodding slowly uphill, on his broken-kneed Pegu pony, with his huge straw hat on and his cigar in his mouth.

"Obsairve," observed the philosopher, as they turned to go back with him, "man's just the creature of habit."

He pronounced it "hahbit."

"So he is," said Phil, who immediately guessed that his instructor had been more than usually drunk the night before. "Somebody else has made that remark before you, Mr. MacIntyre."

"Don't take the word out o' the mouth o' the prophet of the — I mean your tutor, young man," said Mr. MacIntyre. "Man, as I said, is the creature of habit."

They rode on in silence for a while, waiting further light from the sage.

This presently came.

"Of all habits that flesh is heir to," he went on, "let me caution you against intemperance. Whisky, in my country, may be taken in moderation. Brandy, never. You will obsairve that it furs the tongue, confuses the brain, and prevents that orderly sequence of thought inse-

parable from metaphysical study. Take the advice of one who has seen the world, young men; and when you go into it, be careful to stop at the fourth or fifth tumbler. What is taken after that gives headache."

"Have you a headache this morning, sir?"

"Philip, your question pains me. It is true that I have headache, the result of eating imperfectly cooked steak last night. But your question, in connection with my warning and advice, might seem—I only say seem—to imply suspicion that I had been drinking last night."

"Not at all, sir," said Phil. "Steak *is* indigestible. Let me bring you a bottle of soda when we get in."

"Ye're a good lad," answered MacIntyre, "and I think I'll take it."

He took it, and they presently fell to their studies till breakfast. The day passed as usual till the afternoon, when the clatter of hoofs told the approach of visitors. They were Madeleine and her father. The boys ran to help her off her pony, and they all three went off to the garden together.

Madeleine's favourite was Arthur. But Philip, as usual, wanted to appropriate her. Already the girl was conscious of herself. She took the usual feminine delight in being petted and

caressed; and accepted the homage of the boys with the air that seems to come naturally to beautiful women. She was born to be admired. Women who have that destiny accept it without any murmuring, and with no surprise.

Philip to-day, however, was cross-grained. He did not want her to talk to Arthur—he wanted to have her all to himself. Then they began to quarrel. It was a children's quarrel, that might have been ended directly but for a luckless remark of Philip's.

"Never mind, Madeleine," he said. "You can play with Arthur if you like; but when we grow up you'll marry me."

"Indeed, I shall not," she said. "I am going to marry Arthur," and went and held up her face to be kissed by that blushing youth.

"Arthur!" said Philip, with great contempt. "Why, I can turn him over as easy as—— See."

He caught his cousin by the shoulder, and turned him round, throwing him off, so that he tripped and fell with his face to the ground. Arthur, however, rose to the occasion; and, springing up, struck him smartly in the face.

The battle lasted for a moment only, and Philip stood victorious. Madeleine ran to the rescue of her prostrate lover.

"Go away," she cried. "I believe what people say of you. I will never speak to you again."

"And, pray, what do people say?" asked Philip.

"They say that you are cruel and selfish; that you tease Arthur and vex him; and that you want to get everything for yourself. Go away."

Philip went away. It was the first time the boys had struck each other. He was angry with himself, angry with Arthur, angry with Madeleine. And in this mood he strolled along till he found himself at the stables. Then he thought he would have a ride. Going into his own pony's box, he found the syce had not rubbed him down, or even touched him since the morning, and was now sitting—a gaunt, tall Indian of six feet—eating rice in perfect unconcern. Phil's temper boiled over. He flew at the man in a fury of rage—kicking, striking, and cursing him. The poor groom was first appalled; and standing up sideways to the wall, he lifted his leg and covered his face with his arms, as some small protection against the blows. At last they became insupportable, and in self-defence he took the boy by the shoulders, and held him at arm's length.

Hindustani is gifted, above all languages,

with a capacity of swearing. The power of insult is in no other language so great. Our own noble vernacular, when judiciously used—say, by the mate of an American sailing ship, or an able seaman in our merchant service—can do a good deal; but its resources are miserable indeed compared with the strength and vivacity possessed by its sister branch of the Aryan family.

Phil had picked up this knowledge. He used it now, pouring out great volleys of insult—words which he had often heard, but never used before; terms which conveyed reproaches he did not even understand—on the head of the offending groom. He, for his part, only looked scared; until, stung beyond all endurance, he pushed the boy back into the straw, seized the great wooden bar of the loose box, and brandished it over him, crying—

“Bastard, I’ll kill you!”

Phil looked at him, bewildered. Then, suddenly, he seemed to take in the whole force of the word, and instead of offering any resistance, or making any retort, he seemed to be suddenly crushed, and covered his face with his hands.

The groom put down the bar, and began to tremble. Then he furtively—something after the manner of a burglar on the stage—stole out of the stables. Between the stables and the

nearest canes there was an open space, cleared for some purpose of other, of a quarter of a mile. Across this he sped, half doubled up, in long strides, and was lost in the canes.

Three weeks elapsed before he showed up again; then he was brought back, a monument of emaciation. He had been hiding in the forest, making predatory excursions at night to the nearest canes, and on these he had lived. The watchman apprehended him, and marched him in at daybreak, brandishing his long stick with an air of great importance and grandeur; the miserable prisoner, who was about two feet taller than his captor, slouching along after him. And when he came to the house, seeing Phil alone on the verandah, he fell, a mere mass of terror and despair, and grovelled before him. Phil kicked him up, and ordered loftily that he should be sent back to the stables.

But when he was left alone, he was, for the moment, stunned. Suddenly, it all burst upon him. Without other evidence than the mere insult of the Hindoo, he *knew* it was true. The position he held in the house; the superior consideration in which Arthur was held; the silence of his uncle about his own father—all were proofs to him. He rose and came into the open air, as miserable as boy could well be.

Suddenly, however, another thought struck him.

Imagine that you have been brought up to believe—not by being taught in so many words, but by power of association—that there are two distinct races of mankind; that God has made one for mastery and the other for subjection; that while it is your duty, as the sovereign, to rule wisely and mildly, you cannot but feel a certain amount of contempt—proportioned, of course, to your wisdom and mildness—for the governed race. Suppose you have gone on, being neither very wise nor very mild, till your contempt has become overweening, and your pride of race excessive. Then suppose, in the height of your arrogance, you hear suddenly that you are an impostor; that you belong to the race you despise; that you are nothing more nor less than one of the humblest of them. This was Phil's thought. Like the first, it was not a conjecture, but a certainty. Little as he knew of the wickedness of the world, he knew well enough that illegitimacy implied black blood: nothing else was possible in Palmiste. He thought, too, of his black wavy hair, his pale olive skin; and he moaned in his agony.

There was one more test. He looked at his nails. Beneath them was the blue stain that the

African blood always leaves. And he gave up all hope.

Then he sat down and sobbed. It all seemed so cruel; it was so strange and so dreadful. The pride of life was gone. Nothing was left but shame and degradation. He crouched among the trees, and would have cried for death, had death occurred to him as even a remote possibility. He sat motionless, while the weight of his grief bent down his young shoulders.

As he sat there, the sun got lower. Presently it disappeared behind the hills. Long fingers of light came out, vibrating a sort of good night to the world; and then it became dark. The darkness weighed upon him. He got up, and wandered out, thinking how he should go into the house; and found himself near the stables. There he saw some one with a lamp. It seemed as if the lamp was unsteady, shifting about like a light at a masthead.

After studying this phenomenon for a little time, he went to discover its cause. I regret to say that he found his preceptor, Mr. MacIntyre, very drunk indeed, making shots at the stable door, with the view of getting out his pony and riding home to dinner.

He had been left alone all the afternoon, and

finding a brandy bottle in the immediate neighbourhood, had finished it, with these disastrous results.

Phil helped him to open the stable door, and saddled his pony for him.

"Obsairve," said Mr. MacIntyre, "the mind of man, as you will find from a study of the Philosophy of the Condeetioned, has a tendency to—to—"

Here he fell over the bar that the groom had left behind him.

"Mr. MacIntyre," said Philip, "you're drunk again."

"Young man, no—no, young man. The curry at breakfast was prawn cu—curry. It always makes me so."

A thought struck the boy.

"Mr. MacIntyre," he said, "did you know my father?"

"Your father?" repeated the drunken scamp. "Of course I know your father. Mishter Durnford's your father, and Marie's your mother—pretty little Marie." Then he began maundering on—"Pretty little Marie, pretty little girl—wouldn't speak to me."

"Marie—what Marie?"

"Marie—never had 'nother name. Went away—went away to England—died."

Philip turned away and left him, and presently he heard the pony, who knew his way better than his master, go clattering down the road.

He went in, washed and brushed himself, and appeared at dinner, pale and quiet. Madeleine and Arthur had it all their own way for once, for he never even contradicted them.





CHAPTER V.

TIME passed on. Philip said nothing of his discovery, only he became quieter. The boy of fifteen in a year changed into a tall, resolute young man, who might have been taken for two and twenty. The light moustache on his upper lip proclaimed his manhood. Boyhood grows more rapidly into adolescence under the hot sun of Palmiste, and his firm step and upright carriage announced one who, at any rate, seemed ready to make a fight for it.

He never, but once, alluded to his conversation with Mr. MacIntyre. But one day, after a long silence, Arthur being out of the way, he reminded the tutor of what he had told him. Poor Mr. MacIntyre was thunderstruck. He remembered absolutely nothing of it.

"Tell me," he gasped, his face becoming fear-

fully red—"tell me exactly what I said, Phil. Ah! Loard, what an evil spirit brandy is!"

Phil told him.

"I suppose it was true," he added, carelessly.

Mr. MacIntyre rose and went out on the verandah, looking round every corner to see if there were any listeners about. Then he opened every door—there were seven in the room—and looked in each chamber. No one was at hand, save in the dining-room. Here there were two of the Indian boys amusing themselves with a rude dramatic performance; for one had put on a pair of spectacles, and, with an empty bottle in his hand, was staggering up and down, like one who was well drunken, while the other looked on and applauded. Mr. MacIntyre himself wore glasses. He could not, of course, imagine that the representation was a description of himself; but as a friend of discipline, he felt bound to inflict chastisement, and accordingly horsewhipped the one he caught, who had been doing nothing, and then he came back flushed with the exercise.

Sitting down again, and pouring out a glass of brandy and water, he sighed out—

"Yes, Phil, it is true—more's the pity, my poor bairn! It's just awfu', the wickedness of the world. We fight against it, we philosophers,

but we do awfu' little. It's quite true. But, Phil, no one knows it. I know it, because I brought you here, a wee bit thing of eighteen months, and told the folk you were Mr. Durnford's nephew. And Mrs. Durnford knew it, for her husband told her. Eh, she was good. There *must* be a Heaven, boy, for some people—if there's an after-life at all, which I vara much doot. We, who have had our backslidings, would not be comfortable in the same place with her and her like. They would have their own apartments. I sometimes think, Phil, I should be happier down below, near the Bar."

"And no one suspects?"

"I sometimes think M. de Villeroy suspects. He's just a devil, that man. He finds out everything. Last week he came to me, and told me that he'd found out how I had—"

. "Well?" For the good man stopped.

"I think I'll take another glass, Phil. Yes, thank you. You were saying—"

"What became of my mother, then?"

"I don't know, Phil. I can't tell you. She went away. Your father told me she went to England. Afterwards he said that she was dead. She was lady's maid, companion, humble friend, whatever you call it, to Mrs. Durnford before her marriage. And remember, Phil, that she

was the handsomest woman in the island. Hardly a touch of—”

“Stop,” shouted Philip, crimson — “stop, I won’t hear it.”

The tutor stopped, and presently went away, seeing no further opportunity for either philosophy or drink.

And, for good reasons of his own, he forbore to inform Mr. Durnford of what had passed between himself and Phil.

But, one evening, Philip had a little conversation with his uncle, as he still called him.

“If you can spare five minutes, sir,” he said one evening when Mr. Durnford had smoked his cigar, and was showing the usual signs of departure to his own quarters.

“Certainly, Philip—what is it?”

He sat down to listen. Then Philip began, with considerable trepidation, but with a certain dignity of manner, to explain himself.

“You know, sir, that I am past sixteen?” Mr. Durnford nodded. “And I think you will allow me to ask you if my father, of whom you have told me nothing, gave me at his death any means of entering life. I have seen, sir, for some time, that there are points connected with our family history that you do not wish known to me. I shall never ask for information. My father, as

you have told me, was in the army. I ask for nothing more. He was a gentleman, because you are a gentleman. That he did nothing to disgrace himself in the eyes of the world, I am sure."

"In the eyes of the world? No," said Mr. Durnford.

"That is all I wanted to have from your lips. Now, sir, am I a beggar?—that is, am I wholly dependent on you?"

Mr. Durnford did not answer for a few moments.

"I am glad, Phil, that this talk has been held between us. It must have come, sooner or later."

"Why should it not come, sir?"

"No reason at all—none. Only, family business is always disagreeable. Let me tell you, once for all, that your father's money was placed wholly and unreservedly in my hands, for your benefit. I have done for your benefit what I could for you. You will be, at the age of twenty-one, the master of four or five hundred pounds a year. It is not much; but, with a profession, it is plenty."

"It will do, sir," said Philip. "I am glad it is so much."

"But what profession will you take? You are

not a bookworm. The law would do little for you. The church?"

"Impossible."

"Quite so, as I was about to remark. Then, what are we to do with you?"

"I shall go into the army, sir. At least, I can carry a sword."

"And use it, too, Phil, I think. We will talk about this afterwards." But they never did.

Early that year, while the hot rains of January were still soaking into the steaming earth, and the sun was vertical at noonday, there was brought a rumour—vague at first, but too soon confirmed—that cholera had appeared in the principal town. Up to that day, cholera had been unknown. No scourge of pestilence had ever fallen on the island that insurance companies ranked rather higher than England, and on which they put a tropical per centage out of mere fun, and with the cheerfulness of men who are certain to make their money. Nobody ever died young, except from drink. Nobody read the lessons about the uncertainty of life as applying, even indirectly, to himself; and the very parsons had forgotten that life was ever anything but threescore years and ten—fully told. So that when men first heard that the cholera was come, they laughed.

There were various rumours as to its origin. One said that a captain of a coolie ship had put ashore, being then in quarantine, and having spent the evening with four friends, had gone back at night to his ship. But the four friends died next day; and there was no one to tell whether the captain had left the ship or not, for all his sailors died.

Others said that it was produced by the shameful excesses of the Chinamen in pork. This was disproved by the fact that no Chinaman died of cholera at all. They went about in great glee, with mighty uplifting and pride of heart—rubbing their hands when they came upon some poor negro doubled up by the enemy that seized him so suddenly and killed him so easily.

Others, again, attributed it to the British Government. That malignant power—conscious for many years of the foe that threatened the island—deliberately, and with malice prepense, had left unguarded all the avenues by which it might enter. The editor of the most respectable paper, daring to say that the enforcement of the quarantine laws had been more rigid than usual of late years, was set upon, one starry evening, by a dozen public-spirited mulattoes, and horsewhipped. That is, they began

to horsewhip him; but a soldier happening to come round the corner, slung his belt and dispersed them, devious, rapidly flying. An account of the affair appeared in both the straw-paper organs next day, in which the brave assailants were held up to public admiration as patriots of the deepest dye. They were compared to Timoleon, to Brutus, to Harmodius, to Mirabeau, to Soulouque, to Oliver Cromwell, to Wilberforce, and to Toussaint L'Ouverture. They were to have been brought before the magistrate for assault; but he and all the officials of his court died of cholera, and the affair dropped. And, as the pestilence grew worse, men's hearts failed them for fear. The town of St. Denys had a population of some sixty thousand. These were dying at the rate of three hundred a day. All day long, and all night, the prisoners were kept at work digging graves—not single graves, but long common fosses, fifty feet long and eight feet deep. There was no time to make coffins. As fast as the bodies were brought, the upper part of the shell in which they were laid was slipped out, and the sand covered them up. The priests—is there any fearlessness like that of a Catholic priest?—stood all day by the grave chanting the monotonous funeral service, burials going

on all the time. Now and then one of the gravediggers would be struck down, and carried off, shrieking and crying, to a hospital. For if a black is once taken to a hospital, he abandons hope; and, should he come out again, is received by his friends—not with the rejoicing that would await one risen from the dead, but rather with such disappointment as greeted Martin Chuzzlewit when he came back from Eden.

The shops were closed; the wharves deserted; the streets empty, save for the frequent bearers of the dead. Most mournful of all was the absence of mourners. You might see a little procession slowly moving down the street—one big coffin and three little ones. Following them, not some young and stalwart mourner—not one whose life was still before him—but a poor old down-bent black, the grandfather of the little coffins, the father of the big one, hobbling sideways after the dead. Or if it was one who had lived long and in high esteem, his coffin would be followed by two or three out of the hundreds who counted him friend, and who, in better times, would have followed him to the grave, and pronounced a funeral oration over him.

Sometimes the closed shops never opened

again at all; and then, long after the cholera had gone, the police would go at dead of night, or in the early morning, and execute their dreadful task.

Englishmen got together—they always do in time of danger. I once was in a French ship with some half-dozen English passengers. One was the most foul-mouthed, blasphemous man I ever met—abaft the fo’c’sle, that is. We had very bad weather for a week. For one whole day we thought we should go down. Involuntarily, we of Great Britain found ourselves grouped together by the davits, holding on. Quoth the blasphemer—

“Since we are to go down, we English will stick together, and let the damned Frenchmen drown by themselves. Is there any fellow here that can say a short prayer?”

It was a dreadful punishment to him for his evil life, that he couldn’t remember even the shortest in the whole Church Service; and I am quite sure, so staunch an Anglican was he, that he would far rather have gone to the bottom with no prayer at all, than with anything extemporaneous or irregular. Even the petition for rain would have comforted him.

However, in St. Denys, the English merchants sat together in each other’s offices. They

drank a good deal of brandy in those days, in little occasional nips, that touched up the liver if they did not keep off the cholera. No business was done of any kind; nor was there any pretence at it. No clerks came—these were mostly mulattoes, and kept themselves at home, with the shutters half-closed, sitting in a horrible circle in the dark, and with a fearsome fluttering at their hearts. If they perceived an internal rumbling, they took a dose of cholera mixture. If any one said he felt unwell, the rest sidled from him; and if one was actually seized, they generally all ran away. The doctor in charge of the hospital—he was not a Frenchman, nor was he English, and it would be invidious to proclaim his race—ran away from his post. He had a struggle of some days between fear and honour. At last, as the sick were brought in more thickly, honour lost ground. He fled: “*L’existence,*” he said, “*avant tout.*” It was an honest confession, and proved a sort of martyr’s creed; for when he came back, after the thing was all over, and the hospital swept up again, clean and neat, he was astonished to find that the Government—British, of course—was taking a harsh view of the matter, and that he was kicked out in disgrace. The straw-paper organs made capital out of the event. The

writer of one crushing article crammed for it, like Mr. Pott's young man. John Huss, the early saints of the Church, Savonarola, Cranmer, Sir Thomas More, and Louis the Sixteenth furnished illustrations for this admirable treatise.

Nostrums came into great use. Men, at other times supposed to be of sound mind, went about peppering their noses with camphor powder. Some swathed their bodies with flannel, and some wore as little as they possibly could. Some would, at intervals, apply cold ice to the backbone—others, warm water. Others, again, would breakfast off bitter beer and boiled eggs, and dine on brandy and water and soup. One man wrote to the paper calling attention to the fact that few Englishmen died of cholera; and that, as he had recently discovered, the English colonists always washed every morning, all over. This he recommended to his own countrymen, as a thing not, indeed, suddenly to be adopted, but to receive that serious attention and thought which the gravity of the step demanded. For himself, he confessed he sometimes washed his feet; but rarely.

One poor Briton nearly came to terrible grief. He was a mariner; and one evening, finding himself, some miles from St. Denys, overcome

with liquor, he fell down by the wayside and slumbered. Native policemen, coming by with a cart, gathered him up as one dead; and a grave being already prepared, they laid him in it, fortunately removing the shell. The English clergyman read the service, with sorrow for the poor fellow cut off so suddenly, whose very name was unknown, and who lay there perhaps to be looked for, many a weary day, by wife and children. He had finished, and they began heaving in the earth. As soon as it fell upon his face, the shock awakened him. Starting up, still unsteady, he began to bawl out, "Ahoy there!—ahoy!" The aborigines fled, howling in terror; nor would they ever accept any other version of the story than that it was a veritable post-mortem appearance, a spectre, that greeted them. And the churchyard is haunted by it to this day.

As for the sailor, he was taken home by the clergyman, and took the pledge; which he kept till he got to the next port. But he always swore he would never get drunk again in Palmiste.

They were not all cowards. Brave deeds were done. Foremost of all, the brave deeds of the divine Sisters of Mercy. If I die, poor and alone, forlorn and deserted, may one of these ministering angels come to me with her sweet, unlovely

face, and passionless tenderness of heart! Then may she make me a Catholic, or a Ritualist, or anything she like;—all for dear memory of the things I have known her sisters do. For to them all duties are equally holy and equally divine. To them is nothing loathsome, nothing revolting; no form of disease or suffering too terrible to help; no accumulations of misery and poverty, no development of sickness, sufficient to keep them away.

Is it fair, without mentioning a living man's name, to mention his deeds? Perhaps he will never see it in print. This is what he did. In the height of the cholera, two coolie ships put into port, both with cholera raging on board. They were promptly sent off to quarantine off an islet—a mere rock, half a mile across—twenty miles away.

Thence, after some time, news came somehow to Palmiste that their apothecary was dead, and the captain, and all the English sailors but a few. And all the coolies were dying with cholera. Who would go there? One young army surgeon stepped out, so to speak, from the ranks. To go there was to go to certain death. It was a forlorn hope. There would be no one to help him, no one to talk to even; no one to attend *him* if he was seized. He went. For weeks he strug-

gled with the pestilence, saving some from the jaws of death, and burying others. The place which was a mere charnel-house, he turned into a hospital—a Hôtel Dieu.

The poor, terror-stricken Indians slowly regained hope, and therefore health; and when the evil time died away, he was able to bring back half at least of his flock, rescued from death.

It is a heroism that is beyond the power of any Victoria Cross to reward; and when it fires the blood, and sets the heart aglow of him that reads it, the doer of the geste has his fittest crown of glory, though he never hear of it.

In the country, away down at Fontainebleau, they were comparatively safe. Few cases happened on the estate in the earlier stage; but when it began to leave town it broke out in the country. Mr. Durnford took no precautions. In these matters he thought it was like a battlefield. You could not, he said, devise any armour against a cannon ball.

"Obsairve," said Mr. MacIntyre, taking a nip of brandy, "some men are killed by a bayonet thrust."

But one evening, when Phil and Arthur came home from a stroll with their guns, they found MacIntyre in a state of wild alarm on the ve-

randah. Mr. Durnford had been seized. No doctor had been sent for, because none was within twenty miles. They had no medicine, except brandy. Mr. MacIntyre had been giving him copious draughts. He had taken a bottle and a half without the smallest effect; and now Mr. MacIntyre, seeing the boys go into the bedroom, retreated to the other side of the house, and began to drink the rest of the bottle, glad to be relieved of his charge.

There was very little hope. They sent off a dozen messengers for as many doctors. But with the utmost speed, no doctor could arrive before the morning.

All night long they watched and tended him. Mr. MacIntyre by this time, what with terror and brandy, was helpless. They could do literally nothing. But in the morning came collapse, and comparative ease. The dying man lay stretched on his back, breathing painfully, but conscious. Philip bent over him, and whispered, with dry eyes and hard voice, while Arthur was sobbing on his knees—

“Father, tell me of my mother?”

Mr. Durnford turned his head and looked. He would have spoken; but a trembling seized his limbs, and his eyes closed in death.

He was buried the next morning. All the

people on the estate went to the funeral. But Mr. MacIntyre was absent. For in the night a thought struck him. It was but a week since he had received, in hard cash, the half year's salary due to him. Now he saw his occupation gone. Without any chance of finding employment in the island, he would be left stranded. He was staggered at first. Then he reflected that no one knew of the payment except his late employer. How if he could get the receipt? So, when the funeral procession started, Mr. MacIntyre stayed behind—no one noticing his absence.

The house clear, he stole into the dead man's room. His desk was open, just as he had left it. Here was a chance which it was impossible to resist.

"It makes my heart bleed to wrong the lads," said MacIntyre, wiping his eyes; "but one must consider oneself."

Then he looked out the receipt from the file, and put it into his pocket. That done, he searched for the private account book, which also fell into his coat-tail pocket. Then it occurred to him that it would be an admirable thing to get a whole year's salary instead of a half, and he began to hunt for the previous receipt. This he could not find, though he

searched everywhere. But he found something which interested him, and he wrapped it in brown paper, and took it also away with him. It was a big, fat book, with clasps and a small letter padlock, marked "Private." He went down to his cottage, and cutting open the clasps, he read it from end to end.

It was a sort of irregular journal, beginning sixteen years before. It opened with a confession of passion for Marie.

"If this girl were but a lady—if only, even, she were not coloured—I would take her away and marry her. Why should I not marry her? What difference would it make to me whether people approved of it or not? . . .

"I saw Marie to-day. She met me in the garden behind her mistress's house. How pretty the child looked, with a rose in her black hair! She will meet me again this evening."

And so on, all in the same strain.

In the leaves of the book were three short notes, kept for some unknown reason, addressed to his wife; but without date.

Mr. MacIntyre, in a fit of abstraction, took pen and ink, and added a date—that of Philip's birth. There was another paper in the journal: the certificate of marriage of George Durnford

and Adrienne de Rosnay. He took this out; and shutting up the journal, began to reflect.

In the afternoon, when the sun grew low, he went to the little Catholic church which lies hidden away among the trees, about three miles from Fontainebleau.

Just then it was shut up. For Father O'Leary, the jolly Irish priest, who held this easiest of benefices for so many years, had only lately succumbed to age; and in the disturbed state of the colony no priest had yet been sent down. The presbytère was closed, the shutters up, and the church door locked.

The tutor went to the back of the house; forced his way in with no difficulty, by the simple process of removing a rotten shutter from the hinges.

Hanging on the wall were the church keys. He took these, and stepped across the green to the vestry door, which he opened, and went in shutting it after him, whistling very softly to himself.

Then he opened the cupboard, and took down the two duplicate church registers of marriage. They were rarely used; because in that little place there were few people to get married, except the Indians, who always went before the

registrar. Turning over the leaves, which were sticking together with damp—Father O'Leary was always the most careless of men—he came to a place where one double page had been passed over. The marriage immediately before it was dated twenty years since; that after it sixteen. He looked at the duplicate register. No such omission of a page had occurred.

Whistling softly, he filled up the form between Marie—no other name—and George Durnford, gentleman, for a date about a year before Philip's birth. Then he attested it himself—"Alexander MacIntyre"—in a fine bold hand; forged the signatures of the others; and added, as a second witness, the mark of one Adolphe. Then he rubbed his hands, and began to consider further.

After this, he got the forms of marriage certificates, and filled one up in due form, again signing it with the name of the deceased Father O'Leary. Then he replaced that one of the two books in which he had written the forgery, put the forged certificate in his pocket, and the other register under his arm; then locked up the cupboard.

When he had finished his forgeries he looked into the church. The setting sun was shining through the west window full upon the altar, set

about with its twopenny gewgaw ornaments. He shook his head.

"A blind superstition," he murmured. "We who live under the light of a fuller Gospel have vara much to be thankful for."

He went back to the presbytère, replaced the keys, and walked home with his register in his hands.

He had no servant, and was accustomed, when he did not dine at Fontainebleau, to send an Indian boy to the nearest shop to buy some steak, which he curried himself. He went into the kitchen—a little stone hut built at the back of the cottage—lit a fire of sticks, and proceeded to burn the register and Mr. Durnford's private journal.

The books would not burn at all, being damp and mouldy.

"At this rate of progression," he remarked, "I shall be a twal'month getting through them. Let us bury them."

He dug a hole in a corner close to his house, buried his books, piled the earth over them, and cooked his dinner with a cheerful heart.

"A good day's work," he murmured. "Half a year's salary gained, and the prospect of a pretty haul, if good luck serves. Marie dead, O'Leary dead, one register gone, the certificates

in my possession. Master Phil, my boy, the time will perhaps come when you will be glad to buy my papers of me."

Mr. Durnford's death showed that he had become a rich man. All his property went by will to "my son," while of Philip no notice whatever was taken. Only the lawyer wrote him a letter stating that by a special deed of gift, dated some years back, a sum of money was made over to him, which had been accumulating at compound interest, and had now amounted to five thousand pounds. This, at Palmiste interest, was five hundred pounds a year. As his father had told him, it was his sole provision.

Philip's heart was stung with a sense of wrong. That no mention was made of him—that, through all his life, he had not received one word of acknowledgment or affection—that he had been evidently regarded as a mere encumbrance and a debt, rankled in his bosom. He said nothing, not even to Mr. MacIntyre—who, now that he had no longer any further prospect of employment, began to turn his thoughts to other pastures. But he brooded over his wrongs; and now only one thought possessed him—to escape from a place which was haunted by shame.

Arthur, too, wanted to go; and their lawyer and adviser took passages for the boys, and gave them proper letters to those who were to take care of them in England till they were of age.

Mr. MacIntyre, the day before they started, came to say farewell. He had an interview with each of his pupils separately. To Arthur, by way of a parting gift, he propounded a set of maxims for future guidance, including a rule of conduct for morals, which he recommended on the ground of having always adhered to it himself; and he left his late pupil with a heavier purse, and consequently a lighter heart. Mr. MacIntyre, in all his troubles, had never yet wanted money. As a Scotchman, he never spent when he could avoid spending.

His conversation with Philip was of greater importance. With much hesitation, and an amount of nervousness that one would hardly have expected of him, he hinted that he was possessed of certain information, but that the time was not yet arrived to make use of it. And then, biting his nails, he gave the young man to understand that, if he ever did use it, he should expect to be paid.

"But what is your knowledge?" asked Philip; "and if you have any, why, in the devil's name,

don't you let it out at once? And how much money do you want?"

Mr. MacIntyre leaned forward, and whispered in his ear.

"Suppose my information proved your mother's marriage? Suppose that a man—I'm not for saying that I should be the man—brought all this to light?"

"Poor Arthur!" said Philip.

"That's not the point," urged the other. "To be plain. What would that information be worth?"

"I don't know."

"Should we say five thousand pounds?"

"You mean that I am to give you five thousand pounds for giving information which you ought to give for nothing? MacIntyre, you're a scoundrel."

"Eh! mon," replied the moralist.

"Can you give me these proofs?" cried Philip, his voice rising.

"No, I cannot—not yet. And perhaps I never shall be able to do so. Whether I do or not depends upon yourself. And don't be violent, Mr. Philip Durnford. Remember," he added, with a touch of pathetic dignity, "that you are addressing your old tutor, and a Master of Arts of the Univaircity of Aberdeen."

"Go to the devil," said Philip, "and get out of this. Go, I say!"

I am grieved to say that Arthur, who was sitting outside, was startled by the fearful spectacle of his reverend tutor emerging with Philip's hand in his collar, and Philip's right foot accelerating his movements.

It was all done in a moment. Mr. MacIntyre vanished round the corner, and his pony's hoofs were speedily heard clattering down the road.

Arthur looked up for explanation.

"Never mind, old boy," said Philip. "The man's a scoundrel. He's a liar, too, I believe. Arthur, give me your hand. I have been worried lately a good deal. But I won't wrong you. Remember that. Whatever happens—you shall not be wronged."

The next night they were steaming gallantly away. The headlands of Palmiste lay low on the horizon as the sun set, and touched them with his magic painter's brush.

Arthur took off his cap, and waved it.

"When shall we see the dear old place again, Phil?" he said, with a sob in his throat.

"Never, I hope," said Philip. "It will be to me a memory of sickly sorrow and disappointment. Never. And now, old boy, hurrah

for England and my commission! I am going to forget it all."

He stood there, with the bright look of hope and fearlessness that so soon goes out of the eyes of youth, and the sea breeze lifting his long black hair, a possible—nay, a certain hero. It is something in every man's life for once to have been at peace with God—for once to have thrilled with the warm impulse of true nobility.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.





BOOK II.—AT HOME.

CHAPTER I.



HOME in England. It is ten years later on. We are in Gray's Inn, on a certain Saturday evening early in the year. The chambers where we are met, like most of those

in that ancient hostelry, have the appearance of untidiness. Unlike most, they are clean and carefully dusted. The furniture is well worn, but comfortable—easy chairs with bits of the padding sticking out here and there, and the leather gone in parts. The books are those of a man who regards binding less from an artistic than from a useful point of view, and is not careful to preserve their beauty. In other words, the books are greatly battered. There is one table littered with papers: among them may be seen some in a girl's handwriting. One of the bookcases is filled altogether with books not often found in a bachelor's room—children's books, books a little more grown up, and books of education. In the window-seat is a work-basket. On the mantelshelf stands a glass full of violets. There are antimacassars on the worn old chairs and sofas; and amid the general air of bachelorhood, pipes, and lazy ease, there is, one feels, a suspicion of some younger element, the handiwork of a girl—the breath of youth and grace—in these rooms whose walls are so dingy, whose ceilings are so black, whose furniture is so battered.

The tenant of this room is Mr. Hartley Venn, who is now standing on the hearth-rug in the act of receiving his visitors. Of these, one is

his old friend Lynn, of the Inner Temple—a grave man, who seldom speaks and never laughs. He is sitting by the fire with a pipe in his hand, not yet lighted, stroking his heavy moustache. The other is our old friend, Arthur Durnford—a tall man now, of four or five and twenty, not long come up to town from Oxford: a man of slight proportions, and somewhat stooping shoulders. He wears his fair hair rather longer than most men, and a light fringe adorns his upper lip. A face of more sweetness than power; a face which may command love and respect, but scarcely fear; a face at which women glance twice in the street, because there are in it such vast possibilities of tenderness. He has not been a successful student—if you measure success by the schools. A second class rewarded his labours, it is true; and Arthur retired content, if not greatly pleased, at the result. Success he did not greatly care for; and he was too rich and too lazy to descend into the arena and fight with other men. Poverty has its rights as well as its duties; and among these is a prescriptive law—often enough violated—that the rich should keep out of the battle. Remember this, if you please, Messieurs the Archbishops, Prime and other ministers, Deans and dignitaries; and next time you condescend

to forward your invaluable, if prosy, contributions to current literature, reflect that they are taken—and would be taken, if they were bad enough to corrupt the taste of a whole generation—for the name that they bear. Then, be humble; or, better still, don't send the rubbish at all—I mean the words of wisdom—and let some poor penny-a-liner get the guineas. But Arthur Durnford's disposition led him rather to seclude himself, and to forget that, with all but a chosen few, life is a conflict. He was born for but one object, dilettante literature—the investigation of the useless, the recovery of lost worthlessness, the archæological investigation of forgotten lumber. But of this, his high mission, he is yet all unaware, and is at present starting quite unconsciously in that road which will eventually lead him to distinction. For the rest, a heart as innocent and a life as blameless as any girl's, and, like that of most girls, a life as devoid of any active interest or any benefit to other people. Some men are born for this kind of passive life. Their years float along in a kind of dream, or among occupations which interest without exciting, and occupy without wearying. Well for them if, as with Arthur, accident has given them the means to gratify their inclinations.

Venn is the son of his father's old tutor, and therefore, as he explains, a kind of uncle to him. And to-night is the first time that they have met. Venn found out Arthur himself, from some Oxford friend and "information received."

"Durnford," he explains, introducing him to Lynn, "is my educational nephew. I am his tutorial uncle. That is, his father was a private pupil at the Rectory when I was six years old. Your father afterwards went to Palmiste Island, I believe; yes, and made a fortune there—by—by—doing those things and practising those arts by which fortunes are made, did he not?"

Arthur laughed, and said such was the case.

"Palmiste Island is of a more simple nature than London, Lynn; that is the reason why you and I, in spite of our merit, have not got money. Now that you know Mr. Arthur Durnford, we will proceed to elect him, if you please, an honorary member of the Chorus."

The ceremony of election gone through, Arthur took an easy-chair, and Venn proceeded to put bottles and glasses on the table. Then he took up a position on the hearth-rug, and, with his coat tails under his arm, turned to Lynn—

"The preliminary oration, Lynn?"

"You make it," said Lynn, who had by this time lighted his pipe.

Venn bowed solemnly, and put on an air of great meditation, stroking his moustache. Presently he began—

“It is customary, at the election of a new member into this society, to instruct him in the nature of the duties and responsibilities he is about to undertake. In the mysteries of the Cabeiri—”

“Pass two thousand years,” growled Lynn.

Venn bowed gravely.

“In deference to the opinion of my learned brother, I pass to modern times. In the mysteries of Freemasonry, it is popularly supposed that the candidate for admission is put to bodily pain before receiving the terms of an oath so tremendous that the secrets of the craft have remained undisclosed from the time of Solomon and Hiram, King of Tyre, to the present moment. The fraternity of the Chorus heats no poker, and administers no oath; and one penalty only awaits the offender—we expel him.”

“Was any one ever expelled?” asked Durnford.

“One, sir, was only last week expelled for levity. His name was Jones. Jones, at least, will never more be privileged to sit in the Chorus.”

Here a loud knock was heard at the door. Lynn opened it. It was Jones.

The orator, no way disconcerted, shook hands with the new arrival with a greater show of delight than his words absolutely warranted, saying, as he pushed him into a chair—

“Why do you come here, man, void of shame? Did you not distinctly understand that you were never to appear again on Chorus nights?”

The new-comer, who was a smooth-faced, bright-eyed little man in glasses, sat down, and immediately began to twinkle.

“I come as a simple spectator,” he said. “I cannot keep away.

‘From sport to sport concealment’s guile
Preys on this heart of mine;
And when the worm provokes a smile,
I drown the grief in wine.’”

“Why,” said Venn, “he is positively doing it again! Miserable man! was it not for this we expelled you?”

“It was,” said Jones, with a groan. “It is chronic. I am truly wretched.”

“Silence, then; and you, young candidate, listen. The Chorus was established ten years ago as a refuge for the unsuccessful. It was intended to answer the purposes, in a small degree, of a literary and artistic club—admitting, how-

ever, only those professional unfortunates who can achieve no success. It is a club of the unfortunate. When fortune comes to one of us, he shakes his wings and goes. We who remain wrap ourselves in the cloak of poverty and neglect, and meet mischance with smiles. Of the original twelve who formed the first brotherhood, there remain but Lynn and myself. We do not care now greatly to enlarge the circle. Jones, here, was admitted five years ago. He is but a chicken in disappointment, and has only just begun to wait. I have already told you that he was expelled, and why."

"Not," said Jones solemnly—

'Not for a crime he did, nor 'cause
He broke their own or nature's laws;
But for a simple trick he had
Of quoting what he learned and read.'

Arthur began to feel as if he were standing on his head. The other two took no notice of the interruption.

"Society takes no heed of these unfortunates. They are legion. They occupy that middle ground which is above a small success, and cannot achieve a great one. Lynn, here, would scorn to be an Old Bailey barrister. Yet he could do it admirably. He goes in for Equity, sir, and gets no cases, nor ever will. Jones, I

am sorry that you *must* be excluded. Jones, among other things, makes plays. No manager has yet put one on the stage."

"The manager of the Lyceum is reading my last play now," said Jones.

"He always is," said Venn. "I am, for my own part, a writer. I write a great deal. Some evening, when Jones is not here, I will read you a portion of my works."

"Pray," said Jones, "why not when I *am* here?"

"Because," said Venn, "the last time I read you an essay you fell fast asleep."

"I did," said Jones; "so did everybody."

"I have, at times, offered my productions to editors. They invariably refuse them. Under these circumstances, I retire into myself, and put together the Opuscula which will one day be eagerly bought by an admiring public. On that day Lynn will be made Lord Chancellor, Jones will get a play acted which will run for three hundred nights, and the Chorus will dissolve.

"You are to understand, then"—after a pause, during which Jones pulled out his handkerchief and wiped his eyes in grief at the prospect of dissolution—"that we meet here weekly between the first of October and the first of April. During the week and in the summer vacation, we make observations which

are afterwards communicated to the Chorus. Thus we form a running commentary on passing events, which will contain when published an admirable collection of maxims calculated both to inform and instruct. They are chiefly of a moral tendency. Excluded by our misfortunes from taking an active part in the drama of life, we stand by and remark. We are mostly resigned to our position. Some, however, aspire. Dolphin, for instance—you remember Dolphin, Lynn?”

He grunted.

“Observe the dissatisfied air with which Lynn receives that name. Dolphin aspired. He now edits the *Daily Gazette*, and pays a fabulous income tax. Dolphin was not a great man. Of all the excellent remarks that have been made in this room, Dolphin’s were the poorest. Waterford, too, another instance. He now leads a circuit. Jones, what are you pursuing up your lips about? If you have anything to say, get rid of it.”

“I was thinking of Tennyson’s lines,” said Jones, with great softness of manner.

‘Prate not of chance—the name of luck
Is blown the windy ways about;
And yet I hold, without a doubt,
He prospers most who has most pluck.’”

"Are those Tennyson's words?" asked Durnford, taken off his guard.

"You will find them in the two hundred and fortieth page of 'In Memoriam,'" said Jones, readily. "The stanza begins with the well-known lines—

'Balloon, that through the fleecy rings
Of bosomed cloud and mottled sky,
Floatest athwart the wondering eye,
A winged eagle without wings.'

"And this creature," said Venn, "aspires to be a dramatist. Let me finish. The one unfailing rule, which is alone incapable of being rescinded, is the rule of success. Any man who succeeds is turned out. *Ipso facto*, he ceases to be a member of the association. Success is of all kinds, and we admit of no excuse or palliation—the offender goes."

"How if he write a book which does not sell, but is yet praised?"

"He may, when his failure is quite established, remain with us. More—we allow him to be damned any number of times. Jones's works, for instance: his novel—"

Here Jones visibly blushed.

"It was really very bad, and no one took the least notice of it—not even the reviewers. Did any one buy a copy, Jones?"

"I believe," he said, "that there are still a few copies on the publishers' shelves. These can be had now at a reduction. The published price was thirty-one shillings and sixpence."

"Your poems, Jones?"

"My poems," said the bard, "were not meant to be sold: I *give* them to my country."

"It is very liberal of you. I will presently detail my own experiences of failure. Suffice it now to remark that I have never succeeded in anything. You will find in me, sir, as my friends have already found in me, a very Tupper in posse. I am the representative man of mediocrity—am I not, Lynn?"

The grave Lynn nodded.

"You say so."

"I will now give you—as Jones is not wholly acquainted with my fortunes, as Lynn is a good listener, as you ought to know something about me, and as it gives a sort of early Bulwer-Lytton, or even a Smollett-like air to the evening's talk—a brief sketch of the career of an unsuccessful man. Jones, will you kindly undertake the bottle and jug department? Lynn, be so good as to put the kettle on. Durnford, my dear boy, take tobacco, and help yourself to drink. Claret is there, which I do not recommend. That bottle of champagne is remarkable for its age. It is

coeval with the Chorus. Ten years have passed since it left its native public. It is not to be opened, but stands there for respectability's sake. There is port, if you like—it is not good. Sherry is in the middle bottle. You can open it, if you please; but I should not advise you to do so. The bottled beer I can strongly recommend, and the Irish whisky is undeniable. Jones, you rhyming wretch, what will you take? Lynn, I have your permission to talk to-night."

"Stop!" said Jones. "Have you got anything to say before he begins, Lynn? Have you, Durnford? This is your only chance. For my own part, I can only say, with the poet Wordsworth—

‘Not the whole warbling grove in concert heard,
So gladdens me as this loquacious bird.’"

"Proceed, Venn," said Lynn—"and quickly, for Jones is bubbling with another quotation."

"I will try not to be tedious. I began life rather well, for I got into Eton as a collegier, and actually gained a considerable quantity of prizes. I also learned to wear my hat at the back of my head, to despise trade, to run bills, to make Latin verses, to regard science and mathematics with a proper and reasonable contempt, and to consider Eton as the apex of

civilization—ancient and modern. So far, I resembled other boys. Occasionally I was flogged. And I very early formed the germ of that grand idea which I have since made the subject of an admirable essay.”

Jones wagged his head solemnly; whether from admiration, envy, sympathy, approval, or some other emotion, was never known.

“It is that all the mischiefs of the world are due to the insufficient manner in which boys are flogged. Some, sir, I am ashamed to say, are never flogged at all. Jones, you were never flogged.”

“I was not,” said Jones. “If it is any extenuation of my master’s crime, I may mention that he often caned me.”

“I knew it,” Venn returned, with an air of triumph. “There are subtle influences about the older and more classical instrument. It produces an effect which in after-life is only to be detected by those who have made an early acquaintance with it. Caning is merely a brutal mode of inflicting fear and pain. The poetry of punishment is in the birch. The actual performance, I admit—the mere physical process, either active or passive—affords little food for reflection. But when I think of the effects upon the sufferer, I am carried away, gentlemen,

efferrer. There is the Anticipation, so full of tumultuous fears and hopes, with its certainties as to the future fact, and its uncertainties as to vigour and duration; its bracing influence on the Volition, its stimulating effect on the Fortitude, its cultivation of patient endurance. All this, my friends, is truly poetical. Consider, next, the After-glow. The After-glow is, indeed, a magnificent combination of sensations. Nothing that I can remember to have experienced comes near it. It lingers like the twilight; and, like the summer twilight, it lasts all night. It warms like the memory of a good action, or the blush of conscious virtue. It is as soothing as the absolution of a bishop. It removes as many cares as a confession, and it wipes off sins like a pilgrimage."

He paused for a moment, and looked round. There was a murmur of applause, Jones rubbing his leg with a painful air of sympathetic abstraction.

"Let us go back to Eton. I was in the sixth, and stood well to get into King's. Unfortunately, the vacancy that should have been mine came too late by half an hour. I had till twelve on my last day, and a messenger bringing news of a vacancy arrived, having loitered on the way, at half-past twelve. The man, gentlemen, died

young. I say nothing about Nemesis—I merely ask you to observe that he died young. So I went to St. Alphege. You, Lynn, were at the same time at Trinity. At St. Alphege's, which is not a large college, we passed our time in intellectual pursuits which were not among those encouraged by the Senate. This body, Durnford, which resembles a similar institution at Oxford, having, after long consideration, found out the most useless branch of science and the least useful method of studying classical literature, has fixed upon these as the only means of arriving at any of the University distinctions. I could not do mathematics, as I have said; and, as they would not let me take classical honours without knowing how to graduate the common steelyard, and such useful scraps of knowledge, I was fain to go out in the Poll. Sir, if it had not been for the invention of that infernal steelyard—an instrument which I have never seen, and never had the least necessity or desire to graduate—I should this day have been a Fellow of St. Alphege's.

“Having failed here, I returned home. I found my family in some little confusion. My brother Bob—you have met Bob, Lynn?”

Lynn nodded.

“An excellent fellow, Lynn—most good-

hearted man, though he had his faults"—here Venn rubbed his nose meditatively. "Bob had just taken a stand. He announced, resolutely and without any chance of misunderstanding, that he was never going to do any more work. The line he took was this. He said: 'I am not clever enough to get money. I am clever enough to look at other people getting money. Perhaps a life of contemplation, for which I am evidently intended, will lead to greater results than a life of work. I simply, therefore, say to the world in general, and my family in particular—Keep me. Give me a sufficiency to eat and drink.'"

"And how did the world receive this demand?"

"That very small portion of the external world which ever heard it declined to interfere. But out of my father—who, though quite unable to see Bob's logical position, could not let him starve—he got a sufficiency to eat, and more than a sufficiency to drink. However, Bob having taken this unexpected line, I had to keep myself; and did, after a fashion, till Bob and my father died. Poor Bob! You remember him, Lynn, coming out of the Crown, with his elbows squared, quite drunk, and arguing with the policeman? Admirable traits of character were

in that man. His wife allowed him a shilling a day, and his whole study latterly was how to make the most of the money. It went in six drinks; and each drink involved a pipe and an animated discussion in the tap-room. Bob, you see, miscalculated his forces. He had not the physique to stand up against a long course of leisure, and he succumbed. When he died, at the early age of thirty-five, he sent for me, and made over to me, with his usual kindness and thoughtfulness of heart, all he had to give me—the care of his wife and boy.

“At this time, I was working for a living—never mind how—I got it, but only just got it. Every attempt that I made to do anything better for myself failed. I had no energy, they said; or else no perseverance, or no luck, or no determination, and so on. You know the kind of talk. The fruits of life turned, when I touched them, to Dead Sea apples. Then I complicated matters by falling in love.”

“Did you?” said Lynn. “I never knew that before.”

“Yes, I was in love. Oh, yes; for some months before I ventured to speak, and for some months after.”

“What did she say?”

“She said ‘No,’ in a very decided and resolute

manner. I did not so much mind that, as I did the way in which she behaved afterwards. I made then the discovery that there is nothing in the world which more puffs out and inflates a woman with pride than the fact that she has had the heroism to refuse a man. For at least three months after my rejection, there was the mightiest feminine clucking ever heard about it. Her strength was overtasked, they said; and all the family went to Madeira with her. No one asked after my strength; and I stayed in London, and was regarded as a sort of involuntary murderer."

"Did she die, then?" asked Lynn.

"Oh, no—not at all. She came back, very fat. She is in London now; still unmarried, and likely to continue so. It may sound uncharitable; but, in the interests of husbands, I do hope that such a model of womanly heroic virtue may never be married."

"I also," said Jones, "have had my share of blighted affections."

"Have you, too, been in love?" asked Lynn.

"I have," sighed Jones. "A most unfortunate attachment—an impossible attachment. Yet the dream was pleasant while it lasted."

He held his head down, blushing modestly, and went on, in a broken voice—

"As a boy—slopes—Windsor—one of the Princesses. Not my fault originally—mine to nurse the passion."

"Which was it?"

"The prettiest, sir."

"But how, when, where could *you* speak with the Princess?"

"We never interchanged words; but the eye spoke—at seventy yards. Poor thing! she's married now. I hope she got over it. I did, after a time."

Venn, bearing the interruption with an air of sufferance, resumed his history.

"Getting over my love difficulties, I resolved to fall into love no more, and went out of society. I have kept out ever since; and, on the whole, I prefer being out. Then I began to write; and the real story of my failure begins. You see, I was not absolutely obliged to do anything when my father died, but I fondly hoped to make literature a staff. It has never been to me even a reed. I had, of course, faint glimmerings of success, gleams of hope. Every time Tantalus stoops to the water, he fancies that this time, at least, he will reach it; and I think that every now and then he gets a few drops—not enough to quench his thirst, but enough to revive hope. My gleams of success

were like that poor convict's drops of water. They led to nothing more. I fancy every editor in London knows me now. They say, 'Oh, here's Hartley Venn again;' and I go into the rejected pigeon-holes. So complete is my failure, that even my own people have ceased to believe in me—so complete, that I have ceased to believe in myself."

He paused; and mixing a glass of whisky and water, drank half of it off.

"You will remark—proceeding on the inductive method—those whom God destines to fail, He endows with excellent spirits. Jones is a case in point——"

"Why should sorrow o'er this forehead
Draw the veil of black despair?
Let her, if she will, on your head;
Mine, at least, she still will spare."

This was Jones's interruption.

"I am, also, myself a case in point. Lynn is not, which is one reason why I fear he will some day desert me. My own equable temper is not, however, wholly due to birth—partly to circumstances. You will understand me, Lynn, when I explain that when quite a little boy I used to sleep in the same bed with my brother Bob."

"Not the least in the world," observed Lynn.

"Dear me! The way was this. We had a

wooden bed against the wall. Bob gave me the inside, and insisted on my lying quite straight on the edge, while he rolled up in the middle. By this arrangement, I got the wood to sleep on and the wall to keep my back warm, with such small corners of blanket as I could wrest from Bob as soon as he went to sleep. If immediate effects led to open repining, I incurred punishment at once. I learned a lesson from Bob, for which I have never ceased to thank him, in resignation—cheerful, if possible—to the inevitable. Whenever, as happened to me this morning, I get a MS. sent back, I say to myself, ‘For this were you prepared in early life by the Wood and the Wall.’”

Quoth Jones readily—

“You remember, of course, those lines in Bunyan, quoted, I think, by Lord Willbewill? Observe the peculiarly Bunyanesque turn of the second line, with its subtlety of thought :—

‘He that is down may fear no fall ;
The monk may wear his hood :
Give me, for moral warmth the Wall,
For moral bed the Wood.’

It was the answer to a riddle asked by the Prince at the banquet given when Mansoul was taken, and Diabolus evicted. It follows the

conundrum of the Red Cow, and is omitted in some editions."

"Thank you very much," said Venn, not smiling. "I have only one or two more observations to make. The curious in the matter of unsuccess may consult, if they think fit, my unpublished *Opuscula*. They will find there, clearly set forth, the true symptoms of an unsuccessful man. Thus, he may be known—not to be tedious—first, by his good spirits, as I have said; secondly, by his universal sympathies; thirdly, by his extraordinary flow of ideas; fourthly, by a certain power of seeing analogies; and fifthly, by his constantly being in opposition. At all times he is a heretic. The mere fact of a thing being constituted by authority is sufficient to make him see, in more than their true force, the arguments on the opposite side."

"You remember," interrupted Jones, with a sweet smile, "the lines of——"

"Stop, Jones," cried Venn, "I will not endure it. Lynn, I have finished. We will now, gentlemen, talk of general topics."

They talked, as usual, till late in the night. It was past three o'clock when Venn said—

"This reminds me of a passage in my essay on 'The Art of Success.' I will read it you.

The night is yet young. Where are the Opuscula?"

They looked at each other in dismay. Venn searched for the essay everywhere; not finding it, he remembered that he had taken it to bed with him the night before, and went into the next room to get it. When he returned, with his precious paper in his hand, the room was empty, and there were sounds of rapidly retreating footsteps on the stairs; for all had fled. He shook his head in sorrow rather than in anger, and looking at his watch, murmured—

"A general Exodus. They have left the Desert of the Exodus. Past three o'clock! An hour's sleep before daybreak is worth three after it. Shall I have my beauty sleep? No. The cultivation of the intellect before all. Hartley Venn, my dear boy, had you always borne that in mind you would not now be the Wreck you are."

He sat down and read, with an admiring air, the whole of his long paper from beginning to end. Then he gave a sigh of contentment and weariness, and went to bed as the first gray of the spring morning was lighting up the sky.



CHAPTER II.

HARTLEY VENN — whose account of himself to Arthur was, on the whole, correct—is, at this time, a man of eight and thirty. In the course of his life he has tried a good many things, and failed in every one. He possesses a little income of between three and four hundred a year, comfortably housed in Consols, where he allows his capital to lie undisturbed, being as free as any man in the world from the desire to get rich. He is by actual profession a barrister, having been called twelve years 'ago, at Lincoln's Inn. But as he has never opened a law book in his life, or been inside a court of justice, it may safely be asserted that he would have great difficulties to encounter in the conduct of any case with which a too credulous solicitor might entrust him.

Friends, anxious to see him "get on," once persuaded him to buy a partnership in an army coaching establishment, the previous proprietor retiring with a large fortune. All went well for a year or two, when, owing to some of their pupils never passing, and both himself and his partner being hopelessly bad men of business, they found themselves, at the beginning of one term, with two pupils to teach. Naturally, the affairs of the institution got wound up after this, Hartley being the loser of the fifteen hundred or so which he had invested for his share. Then it was that he retired to Gray's Inn, and took those chambers where we now find him. He then became, as he was fond of calling himself, a literary man—that is, he began that long series of *Opuscula* of which mention has already been made. They were never published, because editors invariably declined to accept them: no doubt they were quite right. He was full of reading and scholarship—full of ideas; but he never acquired that way of putting things which the British public desires.

He disliked revision, too, which bored him; and he had a habit of reading his own things over and over again till he got to know them all by heart, and their very faults appeared beauties. To some men a censor is absolutely

necessary. I have often thought of setting myself up as a professed literary adviser, ready to read, correct, suggest, and cut down, at so much per page—say ten pounds. He had a sort of uneasy consciousness that life would pass away with him without bringing any sort of kudos to him; and though, from force of habit, he still kept note-books, and covered acres of paper yearly, he had begun to look upon his works as precious private property, written for his own recreation and instruction—a treasure-house of wisdom for those years of old age when his ideas would begin to fail him. There are hundreds of men like him. Reader, thou who hast never looked over a proof sheet, are there not within thy desk collections of verses, sheets of essays, bundles of tales, which it is thy secret pleasure to read and read, and thy secret hope to publish? Deny it not. We, too, have had this time; and there is no such delight in reading the printed page—especially when the world has received it coldy—as in gloating over the glorious possibilities of the manuscript. What is the miser's joy, as he runs his fingers through the gold, to the young writer's, as he sits, door locked, pen in hand, as modest over the tender fancies of his brain as any young girl at her toilette over her charms?

Venn is a smooth-faced man, with a bright, fresh cheek—in spite of late hours—and a light moustache. His hair is perfectly straight, and he shows no signs of getting gray like Lynn, or bald like Jones. His face is long, with a somewhat retreating chin—sign of weakness—and a long drooping nose, the melancholy and reflective nose. He is not a tall man, and his shoulders stoop somewhat. He has still an air of youth, which I think will never leave him, even when his hair is silvery white. And his expression is one of very great sweetness; for he is one who has sympathies for all. They talk of him still at the butteries of his old college, where, in his hot youth, he played many a harmless frolic in his cups, and where he endeared himself to all the servants. Indeed, it was no other than Hartley Venn who bearded the great Master of Trinity himself on that memorable night when, returning unsteadily from a wine, he accosted the Doctor leaving the lodge, and there and then challenged him to a discussion on the nature of Jupiter's satellites. It was he, too—but why recall the old stories? Are they not chronicled at the freshman's dinner table, handed down to posterity like the Legends of King Arthur? The waiters at his favourite places of resort regard him as a personal friend. They whisper

secrets as to the best things up; hide away papers for him; tell him even of their family affairs; and sometimes consult him on matters of purely personal importance. It was through Hartley, indeed, that I first conceived the idea that waiters are human beings, with instincts, appetites, and ambitions like the rest of us. It is really the case. And at the British Museum, such was the esteem with which the attendants—he knew all their names, and would ask after their wives and families—regarded him, that he used never to have to wait more than an hour to get his books. And this, as every one who uses the reading-room knows, is the height of civility and attention.

An indolent, harmless, good-hearted man, who could not run in harness; who could do no work that was not self-imposed, and who did no work well except the self-imposed task at which he had been labouring for twelve years—the education of his little girl.

Everybody in the Inn—that is, everybody connected with the administration of the place—knew Laura Collingwood. Everybody, too, felt that the production of so admirable a specimen of the English maiden reflected the greatest credit on all parties concerned—on the benchers, the barristers, the students, the

porters, and the laundresses; but especially on Mr. Venn.

It was about twelve years before this time, when Venn first took his chambers, and in the very week when Mrs. Peck, his laundress, began her long career of usefulness with him, that he found one morning, on returning from the Museum, a little child, with long light hair and large blue eyes, sitting on the steps in the doorway of his staircase, crying with terror at an evil-eyed, solemn old Tom cat, who was gazing at her in a threatening manner behind the railings. Unwashed, dirty, badly dressed, this little rosy-cheeked damsel of six touched Venn's soft heart with pity, and he proposed at first to purchase apples, a proposition which he carried into effect; and leaving her with a handful of good things, proceeded upstairs with a view to commit to paper some of those invaluable thoughts which were seething in his brain. Presently, to his astonishment, the child followed him up like a little terrier, and, sitting down gravely upon the hearth rug, began to talk to him with perfect confidence. Thereupon he perceived that here was a new friend for him.

"What is your name, absurd little animal?" he asked.

"Lollie Collingwood."

"And who are your amiable parents, Miss Lollie Collingwood, and what may be their rank in life? Where's your mother, little one?"

"Mother's dead."

"Father, too?"

"Got no father. Grandmother told me to sit still on the steps. Only the cat came. Here's grandmother."

Grandmother was no other than Mrs. Peck herself. Later on, she explained to Venn that her daughter, who had left her to go into service, and was a "likely sort o' gal" to look at, had come back to her the year before with the child.

"Said her name was Mrs. Collingwood. Said her husband was dead. Oh! dear-a-dear-a-me! Said he was a gentleman. And here was the baby—great girl already. And then she pined away and died. And never a word about her husband's relations; and the child for me to keep, and all. And bread's rose awful."

Hartley took the child on his knees, and looked at it more closely. As he looked, thinking what a sad lot hers would be, the little girl turned up her face to him, and laughed, putting up her lips to be kissed with such a winning grace that Hartley's eyes ran over.

"I'll help you with the child, Mrs. Peck," he

said; "don't be afraid about it. Will you be my little girl, Lollie?"

"I'se your little girl now," said the child. And they gave each other the first of many thousand kisses.

"Now, wait here with grandmother, while I go to get some things for you."

He set her down, and went to the establishment of a young lady, with whom he had a nodding acquaintance, devoted to the dressmaking mystery. The lady, by great good luck, had a complete set of clothes for sale—property of somebody else's little girl, deceased—and by invitation of Venn went round to his chambers, where, first by the aid of warm water and soap, Dame Nature's handiwork was made to look clean and white; and then, with needle and thread and scissors, the child was arrayed in what to her was unspeakable grandeur.

"That's my little girl, Miss Nobbs," said Hartley, looking at the result with beaming eyes.

"Well, I'm sure, Mr. Venn! You might have the good taste not to throw your child in my teeth, I do think."

"My good soul, I didn't. Are your teeth broken. Let me look at them."

Venn, you see, was younger then.

"Ha' done now, Mr. Venn. You and your little girls, indeed!"

"My dear Miss Nobbs, you and I, I am sure, have the greatest possible respect for each other. Do not let me be lowered in your eyes. The child is the grand-daughter of my laundress, the aged but still industrious Mrs. Peck."

"Snuffy old woman she is! I can't think how you can have her about you. And that is her grand-daughter?"

"This is her grand-daughter—Miss Laura Collingwood. I propose, Miss Nobbs, to devote a portion of my leisure moments to the cultivation in this child of those mental accomplishments and graces which have made you the admiration of the quarter."

"Good gracious, Mr. Venn!—you'd talk a donkey's hind leg off. Don't be ridiculous!"

"And, secondly, Miss Nobbs, I propose to ask your assistance in providing her with a set of suitable clothes."

"Now you talk sense. Let's see—she'll want six pr' of socks, two pr' of boots, three new pettikuts, four pr' of—yes, four pr' of——"

"Let us not go into all the details," said Venn. "I need hardly say, Miss Nobbs, that in selecting you out of the many talented and tasteful costumières in our aristocratic and

select neighbourhood, I rely entirely on that professional skill which——”

“Lord, lord!” said Miss Nobbs, “if all the gentlemen talked like you, where should we all be, I wonder? You let the child come to me to-morrow, and then I’ll do all I can for her. You’re a good man, I do believe, Mr. Venn, though you are so full of talk.”

“Take a glass of wine, Miss Nobbs, and drink the health of Lollie.”

This was the beginning of it all. Next day the child was brought round, solemnly arrayed in her new splendour, to be looked at. Hartley kept her with him all the afternoon, and gave her the first glimpse of the alphabet. This he found so amusing, that he repeated it every day until he had taught the child, who was wonderfully quick and intelligent, to read. Then he laid in an immense stock of picture books, and gave them to his little girl as fast as she could read them; and then he taught her to write.

Three or four years passed on in this way. The afternoon lessons had never been interrupted, save when Venn went away for a fortnight or so in the autumn. They had gradually lengthened out, so as to take up nearly the whole day. Lollie came now between eleven


and twelve, and did not go home till six, arrangements being made with a neighbouring purveyor to send up luncheon to Mr. Venn every day at two, which was Lollie's dinner. She was then ten or eleven years old—a child with long fair curls hanging down her back, knuckly elbows, and long legs, such as most young ladies of her age may show. Only her face is much the same as when Venn picked her up on the doorstep, with a soft, confiding expression. She promises well—little Lollie—to grow up into a beautiful woman.





CHAPTER III.



 HE most perfect love and confidence existed between Hartley and the child. They were a strangely assorted pair. He told Lollie, almost as soon as she could understand anything, all his projects

—all his disappointments. She learned to know him with that perfect knowledge which comes of always reading one mind. She knew what he would think, what he would say, what he liked. Her whole life was in him, and all her thoughts borrowed from his. For him, the girl had become a necessary part of his existence. Her education was his pleasure; talking to her the only society he had; she the only person in the world who seemed to care about what he did and how he did it.

When she was ten or eleven, the child had a fever. Then Hartley kept her in his own chambers till she was well again. Her grandmother came, too—deeply resentful at being put out, but afraid to murmur. When she hovered between life and death, and prattled, when delirious, of green fields, it was Hartley who sat up night after night, watching her with anxious eyes, while the old woman slumbered in the easy-chair. And when she got better—for it was bright spring weather—he took her away up the river for a fortnight; where they rowed, and walked, and talked, and the roses came back to little Lollie's cheeks.

There was no question of affection between them, because there was no doubt. Do you think Adam was always bothering to know

whether Eve loved him? Rubbish! He knew she did. As for Hartley, what had he to think about but the girl? What had the girl to think about but Hartley? Whom had she to love except him? What grace of life, what sweetness, what joy, what hope, but in him—her guardian, her teacher, her protector?

The fortnight up the river was the first break Lollie had known from her town life. Henceforth it was her dream, her ideal of all that constitutes real and solid pleasure. She had, before the story begins, one more break in a month by the sea. But this was not the same thing, because there was a third person with them. This was how it came about.

It was autumn, and Hartley was meditating his usual brief flight to the seaside. The girl was sitting in her usual place in the window-seat, with her feet up, a book in her lap, and in her hands some little work.

"Lollie," said Hartley, "how should you like to go to the seaside with me?"

She jumped off the seat with a cry of delight.

"I am not quite certain whether I can manage it; but I am going to try. I shall ask my sister to take you."

Her face fell.

"But that won't be going with you."

"I shall go too. Listen, Lollie. I want you, as you grow up, to grow up a lady. I am teaching you the things that ladies are supposed to learn at schools. But there are some things which I cannot teach you. These you can only learn from a lady. I refer, my child, not to those little dialectic peculiarities, if I may call them so, of our neighbourhood—"

"Oh, Mr. Venn, don't say I talk like a little street girl."

"Not to those idioms," he went on, as if obliged to get rid of one sentence before he could frame another—"invaluable as they are to the philologist, but to the minor details of deportment."

She sat pouting.

"I'm sure you always said I behaved very well."

"So you do, Lollie, my child; and you have always been the best of little girls. That is the reason why you are going to be on your best behaviour now. Put on your hat, and walk part of the way with me to Woburn-place, where Sukey lives."

Sukey was Miss Venn. Her real name was Lavinia; but her brothers—Hartley and the unfortunate Bob already mentioned—agreed early in life that so ridiculous a name should be suppressed, and changed it, without her consent, to

the homely name by which she was ever after known. She, too, inherited a little money, with a house, from her father, on which she lived in considerable comfort, with the old family servant Anne, and a subordinate maid. She was a fat, comfortable sort of person, now approaching perilously near to forty. She had given up all ideas of matrimony, and chiefly occupied herself with her different curates—because she never could quite make up her mind between Low and High Church—and with little things to eat. Hartley used to go and see her once in three months or so, every now and then asking her to come and breakfast with him. On these occasions he would provide kidneys—"to keep up the family tie," he used to say.

Sukey received him with her usual cordiality, and rang the bell for Anne to come up and shake hands with him.

"I am going to the seaside for three weeks, Sukey," said he; "and I want you to come with me."

It was the very first time in his life that Hartley had expressed any desire whatever for his sister's company, and she was for the moment taken all aback. It took a considerable time to get her to make up her mind that it would do her good, and it was not till Anne

herself interfered despotically that she gave way.

"Very well," said Hartley; "then that's settled. We'll go the day after to-morrow. Oh, I forgot to say that I am taking my little girl with me."

His sister changed colour.

"It is for your sake, my dear Sukey," he said, persuasively—"for your sake entirely. Far away from Anne, from your—your pill-box and your little comforts, suppose you were taken ill? So Lollie is to go with us to look after you, and be your companion in hours of solitude."

Sukey fairly burst out laughing.

"My hours of solitude, indeed! Hartley, you are the greatest humbug I ever knew. I am to go with you because you want the child taught to be a lady. Oh, don't tell me. A lady, indeed—the daughter of a laundress!"

"Pardon me, dear Sukey. Her grandmamma occupies that position. Her father was a gentleman. Our grandfather, my sister——"

"Was a bishop, Hartley. Don't forget that, if you please."

"We had two, dear. It may be uncommon; but such is the fact. In our family we had two grandfathers. One of them was, if I may remind

you, not wholly unconnected with the wholesale glue and——”

“Don’t be provoking! Well, Hartley, though I must say your taking up with the child at all is the most ridiculous thing, and what you are going to do with her I don’t know; yet——”

“Yet you’ll go the day after to-morrow, my dear Sukey. Come and breakfast to-morrow at ten. That will not be too late for you. At this season, sister, kidneys attain to a size and flavour unknown as the year advances.”

And this was the way in which Lollie got her education.

Time passes on his way; and, as is his wont, takes from one to give to another. Little Lollie grew from a rosy-faced child to a woman—not so rosy, not so brimful of mirth and glee; but bright, happy, intelligent, and beautiful. Do you know the time—it may be a year, it may be a month, it may be a day or an hour, according to circumstances—which separates the child from the woman? It is a curious time. Watch the young maiden of seventeen. You will find her fitful, fanciful, inclined to long reveries; sometimes impatient and petulant. The old habits of thought are passing away from her, and the new ones are as yet strange and awk-

ward. It is a time of transition. It lasts but a little while; for soon the sweet spring breezes blow, the buds of thought and fancy open into blossom, and your child is a maiden, *tempestiva viro*—fit for love.

It is at this time that Venn's little girl has arrived. Hartley is conscious—dimly conscious, of a change in her. At times an uneasy feeling crosses him that the old childish customs must be, some time or other, modified. Then he puts the thought from him, glad to get rid of an unpleasant subject, and things go on the same as before. Not that Lollie thinks any change will ever come. To her, life means reading, playing, working, in the old chambers; and pleasure means going up the river in the summer, or to the theatre in the winter, with her guardian.

It is a Sunday in early spring, one of those which come in April, as warm as a July day, and make the foolish blossoms open out wide in a credulous confidence—which no experience can shake—that the East wind is dead and has been comfortably buried. "Courage," they say, like Charles Reade's Burgundian soldier—"courage, camarades, le diable est mort." Taking advantage of the weather, Mr. Venn has brought his little girl to Richmond, and they are floating on the river, basking in the

sun—Lollie holding the strings, Venn occasionally dipping his sculls in the water to keep a little way on the boat.

“I’ve been thinking, Lollie,” he begins, after half an hour’s silence.

“Don’t let us think now. Look at the flecks of sunlight on the water,” she replies, “and how the trees are green already. Can you not write a poem on the river, Mr. Venn?”

“What we are to do with each other?” he went on, without noticing her interruption. “We can’t go on for ever like this, child.”

“Don’t, Mr. Venn. Let us be happy while we can. Listen. There are the church bells—the church bells!” she went on. “Why have you never taken me to church, Mr. Venn? Why do we not go, like other people?”

“There are various reasons why *they* go, none of which seem applicable to us, Lollie. They go because it is respectable: we are not respectable. Poor we are, it is true, and scrupulously clean; but persons of no occupation, and certainly not respectable. Then, a good many worthy people go because it is the custom: it is not our custom. Because they want to wear their best clothes: we, my dear, have no best clothes at all. Because they want a little variety and excitement: you and I take our pleasure

less sadly. And some go out of religion and devotion—which we do not feel, at present.”

She was silent. Somehow, perhaps, she felt that there was a sort of separation between her and that respectable world of which she could only know the outside.

“But when we do feel religious, we shall go, shall we not?” she asked.

Venn nodded. He was full of thought on this new question of the girl’s future.

“Here is a water-lily for you, Lollie—sit steady—the first of the season. . . . Let us number up your accomplishments, child. You can play the piano—that is something. You can sing a little—not much, it is true; your voice being, as Sukey would say, what Providence made it. Very odd that they put all the failures on to Providence! You can read, and talk, and write French. You know Latin; though why I taught you Latin I don’t know.”

“If it was only to read Horace with you,” said the girl, half-pouting, “I really think you might have taught me something else. With his wine, and his lyre, and his eternal egotism.”

“He should have been here to-day, lying at your feet, Lollie, crowned with myrtle, playing

on his lyre, and singing, as he floated down the sunny river, to the spring—

‘Diffugere nives, redeunt jam gramina campis,
Arboribusque comæ.’”

“Which you translated, the other day, when we read it—

‘The year, for her reasons, keeps changing her seasons;

Now the leaves to the Terrace return, and the crocus to Kew.

Earth puts off her seal skin, and, clad in her real skin,
Smiles bright through her blossoms at Spring with its sunshine and dew.’”

Venn laughed.

“Yes, child; that is, I believe, how Horace might have written had he lived in these latter days. You know how to touch the tender place in my heart. If we have any pride, it is in certain portions—unpublished—of the *Opuscula*, where an imitation touches—we only say touches—the original. But we were talking about Horace. I introduced you to him, you know. Surely you would like him—the fat little man, melancholy because he is getting older—to be with us now?”

“Yes, pretty well; only I suppose he would have tired of us very soon. We are not grand

enough for him, you know. Ovid would have been better. He would have told us stories, like those we read together in the 'Metamorphoses,' about Cephalus and Procris, for instance. But, no. I think I don't care much for your old poets. I tell you what we will do when the summer comes, Mr. Venn: we will come here with Alfred de Musset, and read 'La Nuit de Décembre,' for contrast, while the sun is high over our heads, in the shade of a willow—shall we? I sometimes think—" here she stopped.

"What do you think, Lollie?"

A child, you see, can tell you all; but in the transition state the thoughts grow confused. For then the mind is like a gallery of pictures lit up with cross lights, so that none can be properly seen. She half blushed.

"Go on with my accomplishments, Mr. Venn."

"Well, we left off at the Latin. As for Greek—"

"No, I will not learn Greek. You may translate things to me, if you like."

"At the new College for Ladies, I believe they make the damsels learn Greek. That shows your prejudice to be unfounded."

"Never mind, I won't learn Greek."

"Well, then, I fear you have come to the

length of your knowledge. Stay, it is not every girl of eighteen who has read Hallam, or who knows the literature of her country half so well as you. Upon my word, Lollie, I begin to think that our system of education is a success. You are a very learned little person. A few ologies, and we should be perfect. Unfortunately, I don't know any, not one—not even the ology of describing nasty things in ponds. How long is it since the education began? Twelve years. You are eighteen, child. We must think about”—he stopped for a moment—“about sending you to the new college, to carry off the prizes,” he went on.

She shook her head, and he rowed on—Lolly thoughtfully dipping her gloveless finger in the bright water as the boat floated along under the bank.

“Could we not come always and live in the country, Mr. Venn? Why do people choose to spend their lives in a great town? See, now, we could have a cottage, my grandmother and I, and you should have a house, like that one, only smaller, with willows over the river, and a sloping lawn. We would sit out in the air all day, and read and talk.”

“And never get tired—never want a change?”

“No, never. Why should we? I have such a

lot of things, sometimes, coming into my head—questions, thoughts. I should like to put them all down as they come to me, and then bring them to you.”

“Why don’t you put them down, my little girl?” said Hartley, looking in her face with his kindly eyes. “Why not come to me? And if I can’t answer them, we will try to find somebody who can. Tell me some of them.”

“I hardly remember. Only the contrast of the quiet and beauty out here with London makes me sad sometimes, when I ought to be happy. Do you think I am grateful, Mr. Venn?”

“It is I who am not grateful, Lollie. Do you know all you have done for me?”

“No. I am selfish. I am always thinking of what you have done for me. What have I done?”

“I can hardly tell you all, Lollie. I will tell you something. It is about twelve years now since I made out, quite clearly and unmistakably, what fate had in store for me. The prophetic voice said to me, ‘Hartley Venn, you are no good. You are a person without common sense, without energy, without courage. You must therefore make up your mind to obscurity. You will not be able to marry—you must not fall in love. You had better resign yourself to live in your chambers until you require a nurse.’ I

said, 'Very well, my venerable sisters of the fatal spinning machine. I would have asked a few questions; but perhaps, as it is easier to ask than get an answer, I had better hold my tongue. I accept the position, ladies, with a general protest against the inequality of things. I accept the position. Perhaps,' I went on to say, with withering irony, 'I may not be so proud of your handiwork as to wish for a continuance of my kind. You may break up my mould, if you please, and as soon as you please. It won't be wanted again.' They hadn't a word to say in reply."

"I don't understand," said Lollie—"that is, I only half understand. You mean that you had not enough money for marriage?"

"Exactly so; and that I did not see my way to getting any. The prospect was not alluring. But then, you see, that compensating power in Nature, whom, I think, the Romans should have made a goddess, one who would go about administering compensatory gifts, gave me—you, child; and I have been happy ever since, watching you grow, and become wiser and better; trying to show me what a lady ought to be, and getting younger myself in catching the enthusiasm of your youth. My little girl, you have been the sunshine of my life!"

'The tears came into Lollie's eyes.

"You are too good to me, Mr. Venn. I will try and remember what you have said to-day. But don't say it again. Never say it again, please."

"Why not, my child?"

"I don't know. When you said that I was your sunshine—ah! what, then, is my sunshine? A cloud crossed the river, and it seemed as if your sunshine was suddenly taken away. It is foolish—foolish—foolish!" she repeated, laughing; "but please don't say it again."

Venn was resting on his sculls, and looking in her eyes with a vague sort of anxiety. Her cheek was flushed, and her lips trembled. She held out her hand to him, and smiled.

"Forgive me. I am your little girl—your daughter—your ward—and you are my—"

"Not your father, child," returned Venn, hastily. "Here is Teddington, Lollie. Let us have no more confessions. Tell me some of your thoughts while we go back, and keep a look-out. Remember that day when you ran me into a tree at Clieveden Woods."

"Oh, what fun it was!" she laughed; "and it took us half an hour to get the boat out again. Now, then, we shall be back in a quarter of an hour. What shall I tell you—some of my old thoughts? I used to think that if I

was rich—very rich, you know—what a different world I would make it. Every poor man's house should be clean, every poor man should be taught not to drink, there should be no cruel want in the winter, bread and coals should never 'go up,' and the world should not know what was meant by the word hunger. Those were doll's thoughts, you know. Then I used to think, when I got a little older, how that one person—tolerably rich—might make a little street his own, and by force of example show people how they ought to live. Then I got older still; and now I think what one person could do, if he had the strength and the will, without any money at all."

"How would he do it, and what would he do?"

"He might live among poor people, and find out the way to help them without making them dependent. A man could do it, if he was not always trying to make people go to church. A clergyman might do it, if he was not like those I see about. But nobody will do it; and the people are getting worse and worse."

"Don't think too much of the people, Lollie."

"But I must think of them, Mr. Venn. Do I not belong to them? Do I not live among them? They are all good to me; and it goes

to my heart that I have been taught so many things, and can do so little. Well, then, you see, I think about other things—myself and my lessons, and you, and the dear old chambers, with the chairs dropping to pieces. If I were rich, I should cover the chairs, and get a new carpet, and buy you a new dressing gown, and have the walls painted over again, and make them so fine that we should hardly know each other again.”

“They do for us, Lollie.”

“Ah, yes—they are delightful old chambers. Do you know, Mr. Venn,” she went on, with a sigh, “I should like to know some young ladies. I don’t mean like Miss Venn, but quite young girls, like myself. I see them walking in the squares with each other and their governesses. I wonder what they talk about. Do you know?”

“I knew a young lady once,” answered Venn, meditatively. “She used to ask everybody if they liked ‘In Memoriam,’ and she used to talk about dress a good deal.”

“I suppose in those houses about Tavistock and Russell squares they have everything they want. Plenty of amusement, with all nice people—ladies and gentlemen. They make all their interest in study, don’t you think? With their opportunities, you know, they ought to. They are always trying to do good to each

other. They never have bad tempers, or say unkind words to each other, like poor people. They don't talk scandal, like poor people; and they are not always thinking of finery, like poor girls—not always craving for excitement, like my class. It must be a delicious thing to be a young lady. 'Manners makyth ye man,' as I read the other day. Isn't it a funny thing to say? But I should like to see how manners makyth ye woman. I imagine the life of one of these young ladies. When I see one walking along, looking so quiet, and thoughtful, and proud, I say, 'My dear, you are very happy; you have no frivolous or foolish tastes, because you are so well educated. You have read all the best books, you know how to dress tastefully, you do not spend more than half an hour a day over your things, you are full of schemes for doing good, you are not always thinking about sweethearts, but some time or other your lover will come to you and take you away.' Every woman must think of love a little, you know. We are happy so—isn't that the reason, Mr. Venn? Then, I see them going to church. It must be a beautiful thing going to church—all kneeling together, without a thought except of goodness and religion. You can teach me, Mr. Venn, and educate me to all sorts of things;

but you can never make me like one of the young ladies I see as I walk about."

"I don't want to, Lollie. I like you best as you are. Let me pull her in. Now then, child, take care how you step."

They went back by train, and dined together at seven; then up to Venn's chambers, where Lollie, who was very quiet and thoughtful, made tea. After tea, she played for him one or two of his favourite "*Lieder ohne Worte*," while he smoked a pipe by the fireside, and looked at his little girl.

She was a tall girl now—not little at all. Her light hair had darkened into brown, her blue eyes were of a deeper colour. She had a perfectly oval face; her mouth was small, and her lips perhaps a little too thin, tremulous; her nose straight and clear cut, her chin slightly, very slightly, projecting—just enough to show possible strength of will. Her wealth of hair wanted no artificial pads to set it up and throw it off as it lay, like an Apocalyptic crown of virtue, upon her head. She was dressed in a blue alpaca, simple and tasteful. She had thrown off the jacket and hat she had worn all day, and her little fingers rambled up and down the keys of the old piano as if they knew, without any telling, where the music lay. As she played—

by the upturned eye, by the trembling lip, by the fixed gaze—you knew that her soul was in the music, far away.

Venn looked at her long and earnestly. What was he to do with this treasure—this pearl of maidens, that he had picked out from the very gutter and made a princess? Did you ever mark, in some rough, squalid field, rank with coarse grass, foul with potsherds and rubbish, some sweet wild flower, blossoming all by itself—the one single pretty thing in the compound? Nature is always providing such wild flowers. Over the ruinous wall she trains the ivy, on the broken-down ramparts she plants the wallflower; she will not that anything should go on without some touch of beauty to redeem the rest. On the seas are the loveliest sunsets, in the Desert the Children of Israel had their mirage. So you have seen, in some coarse, rough place in London, in some reeking manufacturing town, among faces blotched, faces smirched, faces besotted, faces sharp with the gold hunger, faces heavy with the remembrance of crime, faces vulgarized by common and stupid vices, faces low, bad, base, some one face in a crowd so bright, so pure, so beautiful, so *lofty*, that it seemed to redeem the ugliness of all the rest. And such was the face of Lollie.

Venn put down his pipe, and stood behind her as she played. She looked up in his face without stopping.

"You are happy, child?" he asked, taking her face in his hands, and kissing her forehead in his paternal way.

"As if I am not always happy here!"

A cold chill passed through Venn's heart; for he then, for the first time, perceived that there was another side to this picture.





CHAPTER IV.

ANOTHER side to the picture! Yes. For twelve long years the girl had been growing at his feet, coming to him daily, sitting beside him as he unfolded the treasures of knowledge to her, and taught her, within the bounds of innocence, all he knew himself. She came in the morning—she left him about six; for eight hours or so she was his constant companion. Then she went away, out of his thoughts—according to his habit; and he went to his club, to his restaurant, to his half-dozen friends, talked, smoked, drank brandy and water, and came home again.

And what did she do?

She went home—what she called home—to Puddock's-row.

There was once, in the old times, an unfor-

fortunate young person whose fate it was to be half her life an animal—I believe a cat, if my memory, a treacherous one at best, does not play me false; the other half she might spend in the ordinary delightful figure of the girl of the period. So, too, Melusine, daughter of Pressine of Avalon, and wife of the Knight Raimondin, who was obliged to forbid her husband ever to look upon her on Saturdays, when she put on, from waist downwards, the scales and skin of a serpent. Little Lollie very early in life realized that her life was to be something like one of these ladies—of whom, however, she had never heard. From ten to six, or thereabouts—Sundays as well as week days—civilization, light, ease, cleanliness, comfort, culture; all the pleasures that can be had in talking, learning, writing, and music; a life of affection, thoughtfulness, and care; a time spent with a man so much older than herself, that even now that she was grown up she looked upon him as almost her father, and loved him as much as any father could be loved. From ten to six, a sweet innocence of trust, the growth of twelve years' intercourse, of the outpouring of confidence which she could give to no other person in the world. From ten to six the modest pride that the girl had in being the

object of all this grace and tenderness in her Bohemian protector.

But from six to ten, Puddock's-row.

To know Puddock's-row aright, you must visit it at least every night in the week, at each successive season. As the progress of my story might be hindered in the description of eight and twenty nights, let us only give a few general details. Lollie's grandmamma occupied a first floor—four and sixpence the two rooms—in the Row, and was considered a rich and fortunate woman. She had only one set of rooms to attend, and Venn only gave her six and sixpence a week for all her motherly care; and Lollie did not know that her own pension money, weekly administered, in addition to this, by Venn, was all they had to live upon. The inhabitants of the Row looked upon the girl with respectful admiration. Of her virtue there could be but one opinion, and but one of her beauty. She was the pattern of the court; and moralizing mothers, when they were sober enough to point the moral and improve the tale, were apt to fix her success as a theme, and narrate her story to envying daughters as that of one who had risen by her own merits.

They were a kindly, dissolute, improvident

race—always sinning, always repentant, always sick and sorry. There was the old lady at the end of the court, who worked hard all the week and got drunk every Saturday night, and was wont to come out at twelve, with her hand to her head, crying aloud unto the four winds, "Oh, Lord, how bad I be!" There were the family of five brothers at No. 2, who fought most nights in pairs, the other three looking on. There were two or three laundresses of the Inn, who were even worse, as regards personal habits and appearance, than poor old Mrs. Peck, and envious of her superior fortune. There was a swarming population all day and all night; there was no peace, no quietness, no chance for anything but endurance.

And in the midst of all this the poor girl had to spend her evenings and her nights. Sometimes she would cry aloud for shame and misery. Sometimes, when she was left alone, the squalor of her surrounding circumstances would appear so dreadful, so intolerable, so miserable, that she would resolve to beg and implore Mr. Venn to take her out of them. Sometimes she would shut out the world around her by building castles in the air, and so forget things. Only, as time went on and things did not change but for the worse, she found it be-

coming daily more difficult to keep up the illusions of hope, and persuade herself that all this would have an end.

The poor grandmother was a trial. I am afraid the wicked old woman purloined half the money that Venn gave her for his ward, and put it into a stocking. She was not a nice old woman to look at. She had disagreeable habits. She was not reticent of speech. She was interested mainly in the price of the commoner kinds of provisions, such as the bloater of Leather-lane. And when she was in a bad temper, which was often, she was a Nagster. From habit, Lollie always let her go on till it was bed-time. Then, at least, she was free, for the little room at the back belonged to her. She could have comparative quiet there, at any rate. The old woman preferred sleeping among her pots and pans, as she had been brought up to do, in the front room. Besides, she was afraid of her grand-daughter, and yet proud and fond of her. She felt more comfortable when the child was gone to bed, and she could nag all to herself—audibly, it is true, and with the assistance of a little bottle containing some of Mr. Venn's brandy. On the whole, she was well pleased that she had but little of the girl's society. For like will to like; and many were

the cheerful little gatherings, not unenlivened with gin, which took place on that first floor, what time Lollie was gone to the theatre with Mr. Venn, with ancient contemporaries of this dear old woman.

I think I see her now. "Tout ce qu'il y a du plus affreux." An antique "front" always twisted awry over a brow—marbled, indeed, but not with thought. A countenance in which deep lines were marked with a deeper black than covered the rest. Small, cunning eyes: if you lead a small, cunning life, your eyes do most inevitably become small and cunning of aspect. Fat lips, such as might come from always eating roast pork—the greatest luxury with which Mrs. Peck was acquainted. A bonnet never removed day or night. A dress—but, no, let us stop. Is there not a sort of sacrilege in describing, only to mock at her, a poor old creature who was what the conditions of life made her? Let us bring honour and reverence to old age. For Mrs. Peck no more shall be said. To her virtues very kind, Hartley Venn was to all her faults very blind. She cribbed everything. She never cleaned anything. She smashed everything. She cheated. But she was Lollie's grandmother.

Lollie's education we have sufficiently de-

scribed. It had, as we have hinted, one capital defect. There was not one word of religion about it. Venn—not because he was an infidel, which he was not; nor because he wished to make an experiment, which was not the case; but simply out of pure carelessness and indifference, and because he never went to church himself—taught his little girl no religion whatever. She knew, from reading, something—the something being the most curious medley possible, from a mixture of every kind of Latin, French, and English authors. Venn respected maidenly innocence so far as to keep harmful books, as he thought them—that is, directly harmful—out of her way; but he gave the child first a literary taste, and then access to writers whose ideas of religion were more “mixed” than would have been good for the most masculine intellect. The Bible she had never even seen; for the only copy in Venn’s possession had, many years before, tumbled behind the bookcase, and was thus lost to view. And of ladies she knew but one, Miss Venn, who still asked her to tea once or twice a year, treated her with exemplary politeness, and sent her away with a frigid kiss. Miss Venn, you see, was suspicious. She always fancied her brother was going to marry the girl; and therefore made it her business to try and

make her understand the great gulf which comparative rank establishes between people—grandchildren of bishops, for instance, and grandchildren of laundresses.

She had two lovers—past and rejected, *bien entendu*. One was a gallant young lawyer's clerk in the Inn, about her own age, who accosted her one morning with a letter, which she handed, unopened, to Venn. It contained honourable proposals. Venn descended to the court where the aspirant was waiting for an answer, and there and then administered a light chastisement with a walking-cane; the policeman—he of the big beard and the twinkling eyes, not the thin one—looking on with a grim but decided approval.

Then there was Sims the baker. A quite genteel young man of a Sunday, if you see him got up in his best, blue tie, and flower in his button hole, with a cane. He attacked the fortress through the grandmother, and persuaded her to 'accept the first offerings of love, in the shape of certain fancy ones, which greatly pleased the old lady. To her astonishment, the child threw the gifts out of window; and Mr. Venn went round the next day and had a serious talk with the young man. He put on mourning the next Sunday, and walked up and

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down the Gray's Inn-road all day in the disguise of a mute. But Lollie never saw him; so his silent sorrow was thrown away, and he returned to his Sally Lunns.

And this is all her story up to the point when we left her in Venn's chamber playing to him.

It was between nine and ten o'clock that she left Gray's Inn for home—not five minutes' walk, and one which she always took alone. Here she had a little adventure. For as she was striding fast along the pavement of Holborn, she became aware of a "gentleman" walking beside her, and gazing into her face. It was one of those moral cobras, common enough in London streets—venomous but cowardly, and certain to recoil harmless before a little exhibition of daring. He coughed twice. Lollie looked straight before her. Then he took off his hat, and spoke something to her. Then, finding she took no notice of him, he took her hand and tried to pass it under his arm.

"We are old friends, my dear," he said, with an engaging smile.

She shook him off with terror, crying out.

There were a few people passing at the time who were astonished to see one gentleman take another gentleman by the coat collar, and kick that gentleman into the gutter.

"Insulted a lady," said the champion to the bystanders, and going back to Lollie.

"Yah!" cried the little mob, closing round him, *for he was down*. And when Lothario emerged from that circle, his hat was battered in, and probably a whole quarter's salary of mischief done to his wardrobe. The moral of this shows how prudent it is not to be taken at a disadvantage. Also that it is best to get up at once if you are kicked into the gutter, and to cross the road; and, thirdly, that as the mob is sure to join the winning side, it is best to be the victor in all street encounters. Some historians give no moral at all to their incidents; for my part, my morals are my strong point. When I do not give one, it is only because the moral may be read in so many ways that even three volumes cannot stretch so far.

"Permit me to see you safely part of your way at least," said Lollie's knight.

He was a gentleman, though apparently of a different kind to Mr. Venn, being very carefully and elaborately dressed. His face she hardly noticed, except that he had a small and very black moustache. But she was so frightened that she was not thinking of faces.

"I live close by," she said. "Permit me to thank you, sir, for your brave interference. I

have never been insulted before. You have done me a great service. Good night."

She held out her hand with a pretty grace. He took it lightly, raised his hat, saying—

"I am very happy. Perhaps we may meet again under more fortunate circumstances. *Au revoir, mademoiselle; sans dire adieu.*"

She smiled, and turned into Gray's Inn-road. She looked round once. No; her champion was a gentleman—he was not following her. Why did he speak in French?—'*Au revoir, sans dire adieu.*' She found herself saying the words over and over again. Nonsense!—of course she would never see him again; and if she should, he was only a stranger to her.

She told Venn in the morning, who flew into a great rage, and promised always to take her home himself when she left his rooms later than six. In the course of the day he calmed down, and delivered an oration—I am sorry I have no space for it here—on the nature and properties of the common or street snob.





CHAPTER V.



ONCE compared life to the letter Y. This letter, starting with a trunk, presently diverges into two branches, which represent respectively the two lines of life: the good and consequently happy—that is the thin line to the right; and

the bad and consequently miserable—the thick black one to the left. It is an elementary comparison, and hardly shows the sage at his best. For as to happiness and misery, they seem to me somehow dependent on public opinion and the length of a man's purse. A man with a hundred thousand a year may really do anything—not only without incurring ignominy, but even with a certain amount of applause. He will not, of course, practise murder as one of the Fine Arts, nor will he cheat at whist, and he will have little difficulty in resisting the ordinary temptation to commit burglary. But for the poor man public opinion is a mighty engine of repression. Virtue is his stern, and often bitter, portion. Public opinion exacts from him a life strictly moral and rigidly virtuous. In all places except London, it forces him to go to church: in a manner, it drives him Heavenwards with a thick stick. The rich man, in whose favour any good point—even the most rudimentary—is scored, may be as bad as he pleases; the poor man, against whom we score all we can, is just as bad as he dares to be. This is one objection to the Pythagorean comparison. Another is, that young men never set off deliberately down the thick line. It is, I admit, a more crowded line than the other; but then there are constant

passings and re-passings to and fro, and I have seen many an honest fellow, once a roysterer, trudging painfully, in after years, along the narrow and prickly path, dragged on by wife and children—though casting, may be, longing looks at the gallant and careless men he has left.

“I knew that fellow, Philip Durnford,” an old friend of his told me, “when first he joined. He was shy at first, and seemed to be feeling his way. We found out after awhile that he could do things rather better than most men, and more of them. If you cared about music, Durnford had a piano, and could play and sing, after a fashion. He could fence pretty well, too; played billiards, and made a little pot at pool: altogether, an accomplished man. He was free-handed with his money; never seemed to care what he spent, or how he spent it. Queer thing about him, that he was a smart officer, and knew his drill. I think he liked the routine of the regimental work. Somehow, though, he wasn’t popular. Something grated. He was not quite like other men; and I don’t suppose that, during the whole six years he was in the regiment, he made a single good friend in it. Perhaps he was always trying to be better than anybody else, and he used to flourish his con-

founded reading in your face; so that some of the fellows were afraid to open their lips. We didn't seem to care—eh? about John Stuart Mill. Then, he wouldn't take a line. The fast man we can understand, and the man who preaches on a tub and distributes tracts, and the army prig we know, and the reading man; but hang me if we could make out a man who wanted to be everything all at once, and the best man in every line. I can assure you we were all glad when we heard that Durnford was sending in his papers."

That was the state of the case. Phil Durnford started heroically down the thin line. When we meet him again, he is in the thick, the left-handed one, with the mob. This is very sad; because we shall have to see more than enough of him. You see, he wanted patience. He would gladly have won the Victoria Cross, but there was nothing in that way going just then. He would have liked to climb quickly up the tree of honour. But this is a tree which can be only attempted under certain conditions. Had he been a drummer in the French army, about the year 1790, he might have died Marshal of the French Empire. But he fell not upon the piping times of war. So he went in for being a dashing young officer: rode—only he did not

ride so well as some others; gambled—only not with the recklessness that brought glory to others; and was a fast man, but without high spirits. In personal appearance he was handsome, particularly in uniform. His cheek showed—what is common enough in men of the mixed breed—no signs of that black blood which always filled his heart with rage whenever he thought of it. His hair was black and curling, his features clear and regular. Perhaps he might have been an inch or two taller with advantage; while his chin was weak, and his forehead too receding.

Always weak of will, his heroic element has now, though he is only six and twenty, almost gone out of him. He looks for little beyond physical enjoyment of life: he has no high aims, no purposes, no hopes. Worse than all, he has no friends or belongings. So his heart is covered with an incrustation, growing daily harder and deeper, of selfishness, cynicism, and unbelief. When the devil wanted to tempt him to do something worse than usual, it was his wont to show him his finger-nails, where lay that fatal spot of blue which never leaves the man of African descent, though his blood be crossed with ours for a dozen generations. Then he waxed fierce and reckless, and was

ready for anything. If the consciousness of descent from a long line, which has sometimes done well and never done disgracefully, be an incentive to a noble life, surely the descent from a lower and inferior race must be a hindrance.

He thought nobody knew it, and trembled lest the secret should be discovered. Everybody knew it. The colonel and the major had been in Palmiste, and knew more. They knew that George Durnford, late of the 10th Hussars, had only one son by his marriage, and never had any brothers at all. Then they put things together, and formed a conclusion, and said nothing about it, being gentlemen and good fellows.

No brandishing of the sword in front of a wavering line of red; no leading of forlorn hopes—nothing but garrison life and camp life: what should a young man do? Here my former informant comes again to my assistance.

“Durnford,” he said, “used to be always trying to outpace some other fellow. Don’t you know that a hunchback always makes himself out a devil of a lady-killer; and a parvenu is always the most exclusive; and a fellow with a nose like a door-knocker always thinks himself the handsomest dog in the regiment? Well, you see, Durnford was a mulatto, an octoroon,

or a sixteenth-oroon, or something. He'd read in a book, I suppose, that mulattoes were an inferior race; so nothing would do for him but showing himself an exception to the rule by proving himself our superior—all the same as making himself out a bird by trying to fly. He muddled away his money. But, bless you, he couldn't really chuck. Chucking is a grand gift of nature, cultivated by a course of public school, army coach, and garrison life. Durnford did not understand the art. Now, young Blythe of ours, when he heard of the step vacant, wrote to his governor about it. Well, the governor actually sent him the money, instead of paying it into Cox's. The young beggar screamed with delight. 'O, Lord!' he said, 'look what the governor's done!' And chucked it all in a fortnight, without purchasing the step at all. Durnford could never come up to that, you know. He didn't drink much; but there was one thing men liked in him. If loo was on, Durnford never played sober against men screwed. Always reputed the soul of honour in that respect. But he wanted too much. He would have liked to be popular among all classes, and he was popular among none."

My friend, upon this, took to philosophizing upon the nature and basis of popularity.

"I believe," he said, with some plausibility, "that a fellow is popular if he is believed to be better than he seems. One man, A., is a frightful villain, but he loves and respects B., another tremendous scoundrel and ruffian, because he thinks him possessed of some noble and elevating qualities wanting in himself. He once saw B. toss a halfpenny to a beggar, and say, 'Poor devil.' Now that showed a fine vein of native generosity. You don't like a man you think to be worse than yourself, because he must belong to such a devilish bad lot; and the formula of A., the big rascal, is always that he 'may not be a religious man, by gad,' but there are some things which he would not do. . . . Well, you see, that poor beggar Durnford was believed to be *worse* than he really was. He did it himself. Used to scoff at religion: which is bad form, in my opinion—religion being the business of the chaplain; and I'd just as soon scoff at the adjutant or the sergeant-major. That did him harm; and in spite of his riding and fencing, and all the rest, he really had very little strength in his body. Fellows said he padded."

When we pick up Philip, which is on the evening when he—for it was he—gallantly came to the rescue, he has not yet sold out, but is enjoying the beginning of a long furlough from

Malta. His affairs are not yet desperate, though he has got through a considerable portion of his fortune; having less than half of it left, and a good pile of debts, whenever it shall suit him to pay them. I fear that the account his old brother officer gave of him was, on the whole, correct. Certainly, Philip Durnford, having had a six years' run of "pleasure" and dissipation, knew most things that are to be learned in that time, and was almost beginning to think that the years had been purchased by too great an expenditure of youth, health, and capital.

When the girl left him, he stayed for a moment looking after her, as she tripped up the street with her light and buoyant step, and turning on his heel with a sigh, strode off westward. He went to Arthur's club. Not finding him there, he went to his lodgings, and caught him reading in his usual purposeless, studious way.

"What are you going to do, Arthur," asked Philip, lighting a cigar, and taking the best easy-chair, "with all your reading?"

"Spare me," said Arthur. "I am one of the men who are always *going* to do everything. Frankly, it *is* useless. I want some one to pull me out of my own habits. But you, Phil, have got energy for all the family."

"I've used some of it to-night," said Phil, laughing, and telling his story. "Such a pretty girl, Arthur. Oh! such a beautiful girl—tall, sir, and as straight as an arrow. I should like to meet her again. I don't believe too much in the sex, but I do believe in the possibility of my making a fool of myself over one, at least; and, by Jove! it would be this one."

"Take care, Phil."

"Were you never in love, Arthur? Come now, gentle hermit, confess. Was there not some barmaid in Oxford? Was there never a neat-handed Phillis—*ne sit ancillæ tibi amor pudori*—at the college buttery?"

"I have not been in love, Phil," said Arthur, lifting his fair, serious face, "since we left Pal-miste; and then I was in love with Madeleine."

"Poor little Madeleine! So was I, I believe. And where is she now?"

"She was sent to Switzerland, after her father's death, to be educated."

"The education ought to be finished by this time. Why don't you go, old fellow, and search about the playground of Europe? You might meet on the summit of the Matterhorn. 'Amanda' he, and 'Amandus' she, and all would be gas and fireworks."

Then they began to talk about old times and

boyish freaks; and Philip's better nature came back to him, for a time at least. He saw little of Arthur. They had not much in common. When they did meet, it was in great friendship and kindliness. But they were almost strangers; and it was only now—Philip being home on furlough and Arthur just come up to London—that they had come together at all since the old days in Palmiste.

I forgot to mention one curious thing in Philip's life. On the first day of the year, some unknown person always paid into his account at Cox's the sum of two hundred pounds. This came with a recurrence so regular that Phil looked for it, and counted on it. He put it down to a freak of Arthur's. Certainly, Arthur had a good deal more of his own than he at all knew what to do with. But it was not Arthur—who, living so simply himself, did not understand that his cousin might sometimes be in want of money. Philip took the money, spent it, and wished it had been more; and he said nothing about it to Arthur. The fountain of benevolence, you see, is a source which may possibly be muddled and spoiled by the un-called-for tears of gratitude.



CHAPTER VI.

SO about this time, Hartley Venn began to be seriously troubled about the future of his protégée. He realized, for the first time, that she was now a woman; and yet he was loath to change any of the little customs which had gone on so long. For instance, that kiss at arrival and departure. A man of thirty-eight is certainly old enough to be the papa of a girl of eighteen. On the other hand, many men of thirty-eight are not too old to be the lovers of girls of eighteen. He could not put a stop to that tender little caress. And yet, of late days, he caught himself blushing, and his pulse quickened, when his lips touched her forehead and her lips touched his cheek. Only quite lately this feeling of constraint had sprung up. Not on her part: the last thing the

girl thought of was love on the part of her guardian. There was no constraint with her—only that hesitation and doubt which came from the birth of new ideas within her. The germ of many a thought and aspiration is sown in childhood, lying concealed in the brain till the time of adolescence makes it appear and brighten into life.

Then Hartley, putting the question of love out of sight, resolutely refusing to admit it at all into his mind, set himself to work out, as he called it, a practical problem. As he was the most unpractical of men, the result did not appear likely to “come out.”

He appealed, in his distress, to his sister Sukey.

“You’ve educated that child,” said his sister, “till she can laugh at young ladies. You’ve put your notions into her head, till she is as full of queer thoughts as you are yourself. She talks about nothing but philanthropy, and history, and what not. She is like no other girl under the sun. And then you come and ask me what you are to do with her. Do you want to get rid of her?”

“Get rid of her! Why, Sukey, you must be mad to think of such a thing. No. I want to put her in some way—”

"Of earning a livelihood. Quite proper. And time she did it. By rights she should be a kitchen-maid. Not that I am unkind to her, dear Hartley," she added, as her brother flashed a warning look at her—"not at all. And she is, as I believe, a very good girl—spoiled, of course. What do you say, now, to the bonnet-making?"

Hartley shook his head.

"She shall not work for her bread, Sukey. I have taken a decisive step. I've made my will, Sukey. You don't want any more money. Bob's boy is looked after by his mother's people. And, besides, you can leave him your money, you know."

"I always intended to," said his sister. "You needn't go on. You have left all yours to Laura. Well, of course, it's a shame, and all that. But you can do as you like with your own. What do you want my advice about?"

"That is just the difficulty. I want, somehow, to do something for her that will take her into a brighter atmosphere, out of the dingy surroundings of her life."

"She lives with her grandmother, does she not? At least, I have always understood that this was the very proper arrangement."

"Yes; where her grandmother lives I have

never thought about till the other day. Sukey, my dear, I am a selfish animal. It was all to please myself that I made a toy of the child. To please myself, I watched her intelligence grow under my hands; only to please myself, I put into her head ideas and knowledge. In my own selfish gratification, I have made her ten times as well taught as young ladyhood is apt to be. I have never thought about what was to come of it—or of me. And now—now—she is a woman—and I—”

Sukey laughed.

“My poor dear Hartley, and you?—you are in love with her! I knew it was coming, all along. Of course, it is a blow. After all your brilliant prospects, and the grandson of a bishop, and a Master of Arts, and a barrister-at-law, and a scholar, and all—and—oh! dear, dear! But I always expected it, and always said it. If you will kindly ring the bell and call Anne, she will tell you that I have prophesied it any time this last six years.”

When a misfortune comes upon you, it is, at least, a consolation to your friends to have foretold it. But Hartley was walking up and down the room, not listening.

“In love with her? I in love with Lollie? I have loved her ever since she looked up in my

face, the very first day I saw her, and put up her lips to be kissed. In love with her? I have never thought of it. Upon my word, Sukey, I have never even thought of it till the last few days. It is nonsense—it is absurd. I am twenty years older than Lollie. She looks on me as her father: told me so last Sunday. Love! Am I to think of love, at my age? I thought it was all put away and done with. Sukey, forget what you have said. Don't raise up before me the vision of a life with such love as that. Let me go on having the child's childish affection and trust. It is all I am fit for. It is more than I deserve."

Hartley was not a demonstrative man. It was rare, indeed, that the outer crust of a good-natured cynicism was broken, and the inner possibilities laid open.

"Ask her, Hartley, if she can love you."

"No, no; and lose all that I have!"

"Shall I ask her, then?"

"You, my dear sister?" he replied, laughing. "He that cannot woo for himself is not worth being wooed for. No. Let things be as they are. Only I should like to see a way—"

"At any rate, there is no such great hurry."

"If she had any creative power, it might be worth while to make her a novelist. But she

hasn't. She only imitates, like most of her sex—imitative animals. Man, you see, originates. Woman receives, assimilates, and imparts. In a higher state of civilization, women will be teachers in all the schools from Eton downwards. Flogging, I suppose, will then—

“Hartley, do be consecutive.”

“I've tried her at writing, and she really makes very creditable English verses. Her Latin verses are a failure, principally because she will not study the accuracies of language.”

“You don't mean to say you have taught her Latin?”

“Why not? Of course I have. We read together portions of Horace, Ovid, Virgil, and other poets. Lollie is a very fair Latin scholar, I assure you. Well, I suggested that she should write a novel; and after a great deal of trouble, we concocted a plot. That was last year. We went up the river, and elaborated it all one summer's afternoon. It was a capital plot. Three murders which all turned out to be no murders, a bigamy, and the discovery of a will in a bandbox, formed the main incidents. Unfortunately, we couldn't string it together. The result was not satisfactory; and we took it out one day, tied a great stone to it, and buried it solemnly above Teddington Lock. It lies there

still, in a waterproof oilskin; so that when the river is dredged for treasure in a thousand years' time it may be found, and published as a rare and precious relic of antiquity. There we are, you see. We can't be literary or musical; our gifts and graces are so wholly receptive, that we cannot even become a strong-minded woman. What are we to do?"

"I'm sure I don't know. I only half understand what it all means."

"It means, Sukey, plainly, that the time is staring me in the face when I must do something for the child which will bring her into the world, and — and — away from my old chambers, where the atmosphere, very good for children, may prove deleterious for a young woman."

"If she could be honourably married," said Sukey.

"I suppose," murmured her brother, "that would be the best thing." Then he shook himself together, and brightened up. "My dear sister, I never come here—it is wonderful to me why I come so seldom—without getting the solution of some of those problems which, as I am not a mathematical man, do sometimes so sorely worry me. Married, of course! She shall be married next week."

"But to whom, Hartley? Do not laugh at everything."

"Eh?" His face fell. "To be sure. I never thought of that. There is Jones—but he has no money; and, besides, I should certainly not let her marry Jones. And Lynn—but he is poorer than Jones, and I should not let *him* have my little girl. Then there is — Sukey, you have floored one problem only to raise another and a worse one. To whom shall I marry her?"

He put on his hat, shook his head mournfully, and went away. Next day he propounded some of his difficulties to Lollie.

"And so, after a long talk with my sister, the most sensible woman that at present adorns the earth, she gave me, Lollie, the answer to the question I have been troubling myself with for so long. She says, my child, that there is only one way: you must be comfortably and honourably married. Her very words."

"I, Mr. Venn?" The girl looked up and laughed in his face, with those merry blue eyes of hers. "What have I done that I must be married?"

"Don't raise difficulties, Lollie," he said, in a feeble way. "After all the trouble we had in getting Sukey to give us the right answer, too."

She laughed again.

"I suppose I am not to be married unless I like?"

"Why, no—I suppose not. No. Oh, certainly not. But you will like, won't you?"

"And who am I to marry?"

"Why, you see, Lollie—" He grew confidential. "The fact is, I don't know. Jones won't do."

"Oh, dear, no. He is too — too — undignified."

"Mr. Lynn?"

"Certainly not. Is there any one else?"

"Not at present, my child. But we shall see. Let us look around us. London is a great place. If London won't do, there is all England; besides the rest of Great Britain, Berwick-upon-Tweed, and the colonies."

"What does it all mean, Mr. Venn?" she asked, sitting at his feet on the footstool. "Last Sunday you were talking in the same strain. You are not going away, or anything, are you?"

He shook his head.

"I have not offended you, have I?"

He patted her cheek, and shook his head again.

"And you love me as much as always, don't you?"

"More, Lollie, more," he said, in a queer, constrained voice. But she understood nothing.

"Then, what is it? Do you think I am not grateful to you?"

"Don't, child—don't talk of gratitude."

"Do you think I do not love you enough? Oh, Mr. Venn, you know I do."

Perhaps it would have been well if he had spoken, then, the words which rose to his lips—

"It is that I think you can never love me as I love you—no longer as your guardian, but your lover; no longer as a child, but with the hungry passion of a man who has never known a woman's love, and yearns for your love."

But he was silent, only patting her cheek in a grave and silent way.

"Would you really like me to be married, Mr. Venn?"

He left her, and began walking about; for the spectre which he had deliberately refused to see stood before him now, face to face—the spectre of another feeling, newer, sweeter, altogether lovely. But he faced it still.

"Can there be a better thing for a girl than to be married, Lollie? I wish what is best for you."

"Would it be best for me to give up coming here every day?"

"No, child, no," he replied, passionately.

"Then why want me to?"

"It would break my heart not to see you here every day," he went on, not daring to look her in the face. "But—but—there are other things. Lollie, I want you to be happy during those long hours when you are not with me."

She turned red, and the tears came into her eyes.

"I have been, as usual, a selfish beast," he said. "I have only, since Sunday, realized in a small degree what a difference there is, of my making, between you and the people in whose midst you live. Lollie, you are a lady. Believe me, there is no girl in all England better educated than yourself. I think, too, there is no girl so beautiful."

She looked at him with surprise. He had never before even hinted at the possibility of her being beautiful.

"Am I pretty? Oh, Mr. Venn, I am so glad."

"Mind," he went on, careful to guard against possible error, "I only *think* so. I've got no experience in these things, you know."

"Ah!" she replied. "And very likely you are mistaken. I suppose all girls like to be beautiful, do they not? And you are not in such a very great hurry to see me away, married, or anything else, are you?"

He smiled in his queer way. Hartley Venn's

smile was peculiar to himself—at least, I never met anybody else with it. There was always a sort of sadness in the curve of his sensitive lips. He smiled with his eyes first, too, like the damsel in Chaucer.

“Hir eyen greye and glad also,
That laugheden ay in hire semblaunt,
First or the mouth by covenant.”

“Not in a hurry at all, Lollie—only I thought we would talk things over some day. Now, let us do something. It is six o'clock. We will dine together, and go to the theatre. Shall we? Enough of sentiment, and of confidences enough. We will rejoice. What does Horace say?—

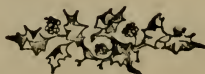
‘Hic dies vere mihi festus—’”

“That is delightful,” said Lollie, clapping her hands. “When you begin to quote, I know you are happy again. Let us have no more talk of marrying, Mr. Venn. One thing, you know,” she said, placing her hand on his arm—“I could never marry anybody but a gentleman; and as no gentleman will ever love me, why I shall never marry anybody at all; and we shall go on being happy together, you and I—

‘Il n’y a que moi qui ai ses idées la.
Gai la riette—gai, lira, lire.’”

And so, singing and dancing, she put on her

hat and gloves, and taking Hartley's arm, went out to the restaurant which knew them well. As she passed through the portals of the dingy old Inn, with her springing step and the laughing light of her happy face, the old porter rubbed his eyes, the policeman assumed an attitude of respectful attention, and the cads who loafed about for odd jobs became conscious of something in the world superior to beer and a dry skittle-ground. Whenever I meet a maiden happy in her beauty, methinks, in my mind's eye, I see again Aphroditê springing up anew from the ocean. Happy Aphroditê! She reigns by no virtue of her own. She is not wise, or strong, or prescient; she does not hold the thread of destiny; she is unconnected with the electric department; she has no control over the weather; she is not consulted in the distribution of wealth or honours; and yet she is Queen among goddesses, Empress over gods—*Regina Cæli*.





CHAPTER VII.



HE days passed on, and Lollie thought no more of her champion. But Philip thought of her; and, when he took his walks abroad, more often than not bent his steps down Oxford-street and Holborn, praying silently

that he might chance upon her again. He might have walked up and down Holborn for ever on the chance of seeing her again, and yet missed her altogether. But one day, thinking of something else, he was walking round a square in Bloomsbury, when, raising his eyes from the ground—I believe he was thinking of his bets—he saw the maiden of his exploit tripping along a few yards before him. There was no mistaking her. She came along, with a light, elastic step, full of youth and health, with her frank, sweet face, her deep blue eyes, and her tall, lithe figure: only by day she looked ten times as well as by night.

She, too, saw him, and blushed.

Philip took off his hat. She hesitated a moment, and held out her hand.

"I ought to thank you properly," she said. "I was very much frightened."

Philip took her hand and turned. The girl went on, and he with her. You see, it was one of the radical defects of her education that she positively did not know the dreadful "wrongness" of letting a man, not properly introduced, speak to her and walk with her.

"I shall tell Mr. Venn I met you," she said. "He will be glad. Come and see him yourself, for him to thank you."

"May I ask—excuse me, but I do not know Mr. Venn."

"He is my guardian. I am going to him now. He lives in Gray's Inn."

It seemed strange to the girl that all the world did not know Mr. Venn.

Philip did not know what to say. As he walked along by her side, he turned furtive glances at her, drinking in the lines of beauty of her face and form.

"Do you live near here?"

"No—I am here by accident. I am living in St. James's-street, in lodgings. I am on leave from my regiment.

"I don't think," said Lollie, "that I should much like to be an officer." She always took the male point of view, from habit. "I should like best to be a writer, a dramatist, or perhaps a barrister. But I should like to wear the uniform. Once I saw a splendid review at Windsor, when the Viceroy of Egypt was here. Are you in the cavalry?"

"No. I am in the line."

"Why do you not go into the cavalry? It must be delightful to charge, with all the horses thundering over the ground. Do you like your profession?"

"Yes, I suppose so—as well as anything."

"You know," said the girl, "it is absurd for a man to take up with a thing, and then take no interest in it. I should like something I could throw my whole heart into."

"I could only throw my whole heart away upon one thing," Philip replied, softly, and with a half-blush; for he was afraid he was making a foolish observation.

"What is that? If I were you, I should take it up at once."

"I could only throw my whole heart away—upon a woman."

Laura received the remark as one of profound philosophical importance.

"That is a very curious thing. Not a right thing at all. I should think it would be so much better to put your heart into work."

"Tell me," said Philip, in a half-whisper, "do you not think love a worthy object of a man's life?"

"I really do not think anything about it," said the girl. "And now I must leave you, because I am going down here, and so to the Inn. Won't you come in and be thanked by Mr. Venn?"

"No, it is enough to be thanked by you. May I—am I impertinent in asking you—will you tell me your name?"

"I am called Laura Collingwood," she answered, freely and frankly. "What is yours?"

"Philip Durnford."

"Philip Durnford—I like the name. Mr. Venn has a friend of your name, but I have not met him yet. Good-bye, Mr. Durnford."

"One moment. Shall we never meet again?"

He looked so sentimental that Laura burst out laughing.

"You look as if you were going to cry. I think we shall very likely never meet again."

Phil grew desperate. His hot Southern blood rose at once.

"I must speak—laugh at me if you like. I have been hanging about Oxford-street in hopes of meeting you, and for no other reason. I think you are the sweetest-looking girl I ever saw, and—and—I am a fool to say it, when I have only spoken twice—I love you."

She looked at him without a blush on her face—quite coldly, quite openly, as if it were the most natural thing in the world for a man to tell her this at the second meeting.

"Do you mean you want to marry me?"

The question, so abruptly and boldly stated, took Philip by surprise.

"Of course I do," he cried, hastily—"of course I do."

"Oh," she replied slowly, "I don't know. You see, I've no experience in marriage matters. I must ask Mr. Venn what he thinks about it. He told me the other day he should like to see me married. I shall see what he says about it, first. We must never do serious things in a hurry, you know."

Surely, the quaintest answer that ever man had to a proposal. Philip felt as if he were in a dream.

"Won't you come and see him yourself?" she asked.

He hesitated.

"I have been too hasty," he said. "Pardon me. I am rude and uncouth. Miss Collingwood, I ask your forgiveness."

"I wonder what for?" thought Lollie. But she said nothing.

"Let us wait," he said. "Marriage is a very serious thing, as you say. I am worse than a fool. Believe only that I love you, as I said. And meet me again. Let me learn to love you more, and try and teach you to love me."

"I will ask Mr. Venn."

"No," said Philip, with a sharp pang of conscience, "do not ask him. Wait. Meet me once more first, and let me speak to you again.

Then you shall tell him. Will you promise me so much? Meet me to-morrow."

"I promise," said Laura. "But—"

"Thanks — a thousand thanks. You will meet me to-morrow, and you will keep the secret."

He took off his hat, lightly touched her fingers, and walked away.

Lollie went in to Mr. Venn. It was four in the afternoon, and the sage was hard at work on his last essay.

"I thought you would never come, child. What did Sukey say?"

"Miss Venn is better, and much obliged for the papers; and, oh, Mr. Venn, I've had an adventure, and I've got a secret!"

"What is the adventure, Lollie?"

"That is the secret. I will tell it you as soon as I can. Tell me, Mr. Venn, is it wrong to have a secret?"

"That is a wide question, involving a profound study of all casuistry and debated points from Thales to Mill. I would rather refer you to their works generally."

"Well, then, may I have a secret?"

"Fifty, my dear, if you will. You look a great deal better to-day, Lollie; and if this east wind would be good enough to go away—where

would it go to, and what becomes of all the other winds when they are off duty?"

"Eurus keeps them in a bag, you know."

"So he does—so he does. Well, in spite of the east wind, let us go and look at the shops, Lollie."

They did; and at ten, after a little music and talk, the girl went home as usual, but feeling strangely excited.

Let us follow her newly found lover, and tell how his evening was spent.

Just now this part of the day was usually devoted to the billiard-room of the very respectable club to which he had been elected on his arrival in England. He was an indifferently good player—nowhere in good company, but could hold his own in bad. He had no scientific knowledge of the angles of the table; he handled his cue clumsily; and was not within thirty-five points in a hundred of the best players at his club. Besides, he was not really fond of the game: it was the money element that made him play at all; and he never cared to play without having from half a crown to a sovereign on his game. Philip was that very common animal, a born gambler. Now, pool always presented the attraction of chance; so Mr. Phil played much

more at this than he did at billiards. He generally got put out of the game among the first. Still, there is always a large element of luck about it; and though you are knocked out, there is a chance of a bet or two on the lives left in. It was a mild enough affair—three-shilling pool and shilling lives, just enough to keep the spark of gambling alive. At the pool-table, as a matter of course, Philip picked up a few friends—Captains Shairp and Smythe, late of the —th, in which regiment they had lost all their money, and perhaps a little of their honour; living now, it is whispered, largely on their wits. Gentlemen such as these play well at most games, whether of chance or skill. They have a habit of making friends with new members of the club; though it is observed that these friendships seldom last long. And yet, Smythe and Shairp were two of the most agreeable, polite, open-hearted fellows it is possible to conceive. No men corrected the marker's mistakes so softly: no men called to the waiters for a drink in so jolly and affable a tone. Yet nobody cared for their society. Perhaps the captains were to blame for this. Who knows? On the other hand, people might be wrong in whispering away their fair fame. The fact is indisputable—they had the misfortune to be disliked.

Philip Durnford knew nothing of all this when he joined his club; and so, in two days' time, he nodded to the captains as they chalked their cues for business, chatted in a week, and was a friend in a fortnight. Perhaps, if Smythe and Shairp had known the exact amount of Mr. Philip's balance at his agents, they might not have been so free and open-handed in the matter of cigars.

It was on the evening of this, his second meeting with Laura, that Philip dined at his club, and went quietly into the billiard-room after dinner: intending to play till nine, and then go to the French play, where he had a stall—centre of the second row. The evening proved a sort of turning-point in his career; for, unluckily, he never went to the French play at all. His two friends had also two friends with them—very young fellows, with the air of wealth about them. In a word, pigeons being plucked. Two or three other men were playing in the pool with them: among these was young Mylles, cornet in the Hussars, the most amiable and the silliest young gander in the club: a little looked down upon, because his father had been connected with the soap-boiling interest. Said Shairp, when Phil proposed to put down his cue and go—

“If you would stay, we could make up two

rubbers. Pray don't go—that is, if you can stay."

It poured in torrents. Phil looked out into the wet street, hesitated, and was lost.

The card-room was cozy enough—bright and warm; though the rain pelted hard against the windows, and came spitting down the chimney into the fire. Over the fireplace hung the usual rules against heavy bets and games of chance—a fact which did not restrain the astute Shairp. He said, after a rubber—

"By Jove! Whist is a very fine game, and a very noble game, and all that; but at the risk of being thought an ass, I must say it is not exciting enough to please me."

Captain Smythe concurred.

So did Phil. He hated whist with all his heart. He was a bad player.

"I really think, now, if you will excuse me, I shall go to the play. It is past ten already, and I want to see Mdlle. Dufont."

"But you can't go out in this rain, you know. It's absurd to have a cab to cross the street in. Wait a bit."

Phil waited. Another rubber was played through. Smythe walked to the window, threw up his arms over his head, and yawned loudly.

"Smythe's tired," said Shairp.

"So am I," said Phil.

"We might have a little something else for a change, eh?"

"Ah," said Smythe, "we might. Confound it, though, we can't play here, and"—pulling out his watch—"I've got a most particular appointment at eleven."

"I haven't had a hand at loo for—let me see—six months, I know, if it's a day," said Shairp.

His friend had ten objections—overruled in ten seconds.

One of the party never played at loo, and left them. The younger pigeon, who had just got into newly furnished chambers, said—

"It paws so with wain, or we might go to my diggings. What a baw it is! One's boots would be sopped thorough before one could get into a Hansom."

So they played at the club.

"Just ten minutes, you know," said Shairp and Smythe.

The ten minutes grew into an hour and a half. The stakes were doubled twice, and the game was "guinea unlimited," when the pigeons were so thirsty that they risked ringing the bell.

"Brandy and soda, waiter."

The drinks arrived, and with them a hint that they were breaking the rules of the club.

Phil was the heaviest loser, and with his money he lost what is of much more value at games of chance—his temper. He answered the polite message of the servant with an oath. Two minutes afterwards the steward came. Civilly he pointed to the rules hanging over the fireplace, and asked the gentlemen to desist.

Shairp and Smythe said he was quite right, and mentally calculated what they had won by handling the money in their pockets.

But Philip acted differently. He said—

“It’s an infernal silly rule, that’s all I’ve got to say.”

“It is the rule, sir,” said the nettled servant.

“Then d—n the rule, and you too.” And he tore the cardboard from the nail it hung on, and tore it into a dozen pieces. Some fell in the fender, some in the fire.

“I say, |Durnford,” said Shairp, “I think that’s rather strong.”

Phil laughed. The man said he must report the act to the secretary, and left the room.

They played till there was a single. Then everybody but Philip and one of the two pigeons had had enough. They were either winners on the night, or had not lost. So the pigeon,

backed by Phil, insisted that they could not leave off yet; and the party of seven adjourned in two four-wheelers to the pigeon's chambers.

Here, when the fire was lighted, and they had tried the quality of their host's liquors, the game went on. A fresh place, new cards.

"My luck will change, you'll see," said Phil. But it did not, and as all his ready money was gone, he put in I O Us, written on scraps of paper and signed P. D., with an apology.

"A man can't carry the Bank of England about with him," he said.

"I suppose he is good," whispered Shairp.

"Right as the mail," replied Smythe.

So they went on, and the two friends took Phil's paper as readily as their young pigeon's notes.

The game waxed warm. The stakes got high. Their host emptied two gold-topped scent bottles filled with sovereigns out of his dressing case on to the claret cloth of his card table, and they were gone in three rounds. The bottles held fifty a-piece too.

"My usual luck," growled Philip. "Looed again."

"I never saw anything like it," said Smythe. "It must turn, though, and we need not hurry."

"Oh, no—play for ever if you like, he-ah," said their host. He was getting rather tipsy.

But Shairp and Smythe, who had earned their money, got fidgety, and began to feel very sleepy.

Shairp nodded in his chair. Smythe looked at his watch every few minutes, although there were three French clocks in the rooms, chiming the quarters, and his own watch had stopped at half-past three.

Phil's luck had not turned, and he was very much excited. His head ached, his eyes ached, the brandy he had drunk had made his legs feel queer, and his temper was what a gentleman's is when luck has been against him all night.

There were frequent squabbles as to the amount of the pool, the division of it into tricks, as to who was looted and who was not; but oftenest about who had not put his money in.

Little silly, honest Mylles was now the soberest of the party—always excepting the two confederates—and he was only kept out of his bed in his father's house in Eaton-square by the feeling that he ought not to be the first to run away, as he had not lost much.

Phil was inaccurate, and Mylles corrected him more than once. The others supported Mylles's

view, and this riled Phil. At last, when Phil exclaimed—

“Somebody has not put in again,” he looked pointedly across the table.

“I put in,” said Shairp, wide awake. “I know mine. It was two half sovs and a shilling.”

“I saw you,” said Smythe, quite careless whether the assertion possessed the merit of truth or not.

“—— parcit
Cognatis maculis similis fera.”

“I know I put in,” said Shairp and everybody.

“Then it’s put on to me again,” said Phil, snappishly.

“You did not put in, I know,” said Mylles, quietly. “I saw who put in.”

“That be d——d,” said Philip, his features swelling and his lips twitching.

The cornet turned a little pale.

“If you mean those words, I must leave the room.

“Consider them repeated,” said Philip, in a fury.

“I must go,” said Mylles, rising.

“Go, then; and be d——d to you.”

To two persons present it did not matter. Their end was served—for the night. The three gentlemen who heard it were shocked,

and ran after Mylles. But he could not be prevailed on to come back.

When they returned without him, Phil was laughing immoderately, with laughter half real, half affected.

"I'll tell you what I'm laughing at," he said. "I was thinking what a scene Thackeray would have made out of all this."

"Thackeray, at least, would never have behaved so to anybody," said the soberest of the men.

Phil laughed, feeling a good deal ashamed, and the party separated. Phil, with a note of the amount of the I O Us—a good deal heavier than he at all expected—and a promise to send cheques the next morning, went home to bed.

It was broad daylight, and therefore tolerably late.

As he felt for the latch-key, he found the ticket for the stall in his pocket.

"Wish I'd gone there," he sighed.

Morning brought repentance. He sent his cheques; he sent in his resignation to the club; he sought out Mylles and apologized; and then—most fatal act—he met Smythe, and accepted a proposal of that gallant officer's to put his name down at the Burleigh Club.



CHAPTER VIII.

IF you want to see Marguerite waiting for Faust, as likely a spot as any to find her is the left-hand walk, below the bridge, in St. James's Park—that part of the walk which is opposite to the Foreign Office, and has an umbrageous protection of leaves and branches. I am told that the British Museum is another likely place. Certainly, it has never yet been satisfactorily explained why so many pretty girls go there. South Kensington is greatly frequented by young ladies who delight in those innocent dallyings with a serious passion which we call a flirtation. According to some authorities, the Crystal Palace is the most likely place of all. But my own experience leads me to select St. James's Park. There, between the hours of ten and one, or

between three and five—because Marguerite dines with her family at one—you may always see some pretty rosy-cheeked damsel strolling, apparently with no purpose except that of gentle exercise, up and down the shady walks. Sometimes she stops at the water's edge, and contemplates the ducks which adorn the lake, or impatiently pushes the gravel into the water with the point of her parasol. Sometimes she makes great play with her book. But always she is there first; for very fear, poor child, that she may miss him. And he always comes late.

On this particular morning—a fresh, bright morning in May—the east winds having gone away earlier than usual, and the leaves really beginning to feel tolerably safe in coming out, a young girl of eighteen is loitering up and down, with an anxious and rather careworn look. Big Ben chimes the quarters, and people come and go. But she remains, twisting her glove, and biting her lips with vexation. The appointed time was half-past ten. She was there at a quarter before ten. It is now eleven.

“And he said he would be there punctually,” she murmurs.

Presently, she leaves off tapping the ground impatiently. Her cheek flushes. Her eyes begin to soften. She hesitates. She turns into

the shadiest part of the walk, while a manly heel comes crunching the gravel behind her. There is no one in the walk but a policeman. He—good, easy man—as one used to the ways of young people, and as experienced as the moon herself, turns away, and slowly leaves them alone.

“Laura,” whispers the new-comer, taking both her hands.

She makes pretence of being angry.

“Philip! And you promised to be here at half-past ten.”

“I could not help it, child. Regimental duties detained me.”

“But your regiment is at Malta.”

“That is it. Correspondence. Letters which had to be answered.”

Lovelace himself never told a greater fib.

And presently they sit down and talk.

“See what I have brought for you, Laura,” says the lover, lugging out a pair of earrings, in the child’s eyes worthy to be worn by a duchess. “Will you wear them, and will you think of me every time you put them on?”

Laura takes the earrings, and looks up at him in a grave and serious way. She has none of the little coquettish ways of girls who want to play and sport with their lovers, like an angler

with a fish. That was because she had never associated with girls of her own age at all. Straightforward, and perfectly truthful, she answered him now with another question.

"Will you tell me again what you told me when we met last—the second time we ever met?"

"I told you that I loved you, and I asked you to marry me. Tell me in return that you love me a very little. If you give me back a tenth part of my love for you, Laura, I should be rich indeed in love."

"I don't know," she answered, looking him full in the face. "I like you. You are a gentleman, and—and handsome, and you are pleasant. Then you fall in love with me, which, I am sure, must be a silly thing to do. That's against you, you know. But how am I to know that I love you?"

"Do you want to see me?"

"Yes," she answered, frankly; "else I should not be here now."

"Do you love anybody else?"

"Oh, no."

"Do you think of me?"

"Why, of course. I've been thinking of nothing else. It is all so strange. I've been dreaming of you, even," she added laughing.

"And you have said nothing to Mr. — what is his name, your guardian?"

"Mr. Venn? No—nothing. I only told him I had a secret, and wanted to keep it for the present."

"Good child."

"Then, I told him yesterday that I was coming here—all part of my secret—at half-past ten."

"You told him you were coming here?" said Philip, starting up. "Then he is quite sure to come too."

"Mr. Venn is a gentleman, Mr. Durnford," said Laura, with great dignity. "He trusts people altogether, or not at all."

"By Jove!" murmured Phil, "he must be a very remarkable man."

"Mr. Venn told me to keep my secret as long as ever I pleased. So that is all right. And now I must tell you two or three things about myself, and we will talk about love and all that afterwards, if you like."

"No; let us talk about love now. Never mind the two or three things."

"But we must, you know. Now, listen. Who do you think I am? Tell me honestly, because I want to know. Quite honestly, mind. Don't think you will offend me."

"Well—honestly, I do not know and cannot guess. You dress like all young ladies, but you are somehow different."

"Ah," replied Laura, "I never shall be like them."

"But, child, you are a great deal better. You don't pretend to blush, and put on all sorts of little affectations; and you haven't learned all their tricks."

"What affectations—what tricks?"

"And I like you all the better for it. Now, tell me who you are, and all about yourself."

"My mother was a poor girl. My father was a gentleman—I am glad to know that. He died before I was born. My grandmother is a poor old woman, who gets her living by being a laundress in Gray's Inn. And if it had not been for Mr. Venn, I should have been—I don't know—anything. He took me when I was five years old, and has been educating me ever since. I never spoke to any lady in my life, except Miss Venn, his sister. I never go anywhere, except with Mr. Venn; and I never spoke to any gentleman, except Mr. Venn's most intimate friends, until I met you. I have no relations, no friends, no connexions. I belong to the very lowest stratum of London life. Now, Mr.

Durnford, you have all my story. What do you think of it?"

His face wore a puzzled expression.

"Tell me more. Have you no brothers?"

"No, none."

"That's a good thing. I mean, of course, it is always best to be without brothers and cousins. Don't you think so?"

"I don't know. It must be nice to have one brother all to yourself, you know. There's a large family of brothers, grown-up brothers, living next door to my grandmother's. They get tipsy every Saturday evening, and fight. I should not like brothers like them. To be sure, they are stonemasons."

"And now tell me more about your guardian, Mr. Venn. I suppose he is a fidgety old gentleman—likes to have you about him to nurse him, and all that?"

Lollie burst out laughing.

"Mr. Venn is not an old gentleman at all. Older than you, of course, ever so much. He must be thirty-seven, at least."

"Oh!" Philip's face lengthened. "And does Mr. Venn never—never make love to you on his own account?"

She laughed the louder.

"Oh, what nonsense!" she cried—"Mr. Venn

making love to me. He has told me twice that he wants me to marry a gentleman. That was why I agreed to meet you again."

"So there was no love for me at all," said Philip.

"I wish you wouldn't talk like that," replied the girl. "I've told you already. What more can I say? You asked me if I loved anybody else. Of course I do not. Then you asked me if I liked you. Of course I do. And if I have been thinking about you. Of course I have. Now, sir, what more do you want?"

"Laura, if you loved me, you would long to see me again; your pulse would beat, and your face would flush, when you met me. But you are cold and passionless. You know"—his own face flushing—"that I think of no one but you. You know that—that there is nothing in the world I would not give to win you. And yet you play with me as if I were a statue of marble."

She looked at him in a kind of surprise.

"I don't understand you at all. What am I to say? You tell me you love me. That makes me very proud, because it is a great thing to be loved by a gentleman. I am grateful. What more do you want? My pulse doesn't beat any faster when I see you coming along the walk—

not a bit. If it did I would tell you. Tell me what it is you want me to do, and I will do it. But of course you would not like me to tell you anything but the truth."

She looked at him with her full, earnest eyes. His fell before them. They were so reproachful in their innocence and purity.

"I want nothing, Laura," he said, in a husky voice—"nothing. Only I love you, child, and you must be mine."

"Oh!" she replied, clapping her hands. "Then I will tell Mr. Venn at once. He will be glad. And you shall come up with me to see him."

"I am afraid that will hardly do," said her lover, feebly. "No. Listen, Laura, dear. Mr. Venn knows you have a secret, and has given you permission to keep it, hasn't he?"

"Yes."

"Then we will keep it. We will keep it till the day we are married, and then we will go together to his chambers, you and I, and you shall say—

"“Mr. Venn, I have done what you wanted me to do. I have married a man who loves me—who is a gentleman; and I have done it, first because you will be pleased, and secondly because I love him too.”"

She pondered a little.

"I wonder if that is right. Don't you think I ought to tell him at once?"

"Oh, no—certainly not yet. Not till we are actually married. Think how gratified Mr. Venn will be."

She was not yet satisfied.

"I will think it over," she said. "Mr. Venn always says that going to bed is the best thing for bringing your opinion right. Whenever he is troubled with anything, he goes to bed early, and in the morning he is always as happy as ever. I am quite sure he would be very glad to be told all about it at once. Some day, how proud and happy we shall all be to have known him."

"Very likely; and meanwhile, Laura, nothing will be said to him."

"No—I will go on keeping the secret. But, Philip, it will be so delightful when we can all three go together up the river. Do you know the Bells of Ouseley? We often go there in the summer, row down the river, you know, have dinner, and row back again in the evening for the last train. There is nothing in the world so delightful."

"But if we are married, you may not be able to be so much with Mr. Venn."

Her face fell.

"Tell me," she said. "Marriage does not mean that I am to be separated from Mr. Venn, does it? Because if it does, I would never marry any one. No, not if he loved me—as much as you say you do."

"Marriage, my little innocent pet," said Philip, laughing, "means sometimes that two people are so fond of each other that they never want anybody else's society at all. But with you and me, it will mean that we shall be so proud of each other, so pleased with each other's society, that we shall be glad to get Mr. Venn, whom you are so fond of, to share it with us. He shall be with us all day if you like, as many hours in the day as you spend with him now. But all the rest of the day you will spend with me, and my life will be given up to make you happy."

She looked at him again with wondering eyes, softened in expression.

"That sounds very pleasant and sweet. I think you must be a good man. Are you as good as Mr. Venn?"

"I don't know how good Mr. Venn is."

"I could tell you lots of things about Mr. Venn's goodness. There was poor Mary. That is four years ago now, and I was a very little

girl. I don't know what she did; but her father turned her away from his doors, and she was starving. I told Mr. Venn, and he helped her to get a place in a theatre, where she works now. Poor Mary! I met her the other day; and when she asked after Mr. Venn, she burst out crying. Then once, when old Mrs. Weeks's son Joe fell off the ladder—it was a terrible thing for them, you know, because he broke his leg, and was laid up for weeks, and nothing for his mother while he was in the hospital—Mr. Venn heard of it, and kept the old woman till Joe came out of the hospital again. I saw him, one Sunday, carrying a leg of mutton himself, wrapped up in the *Observer*, to Mrs. Weeks's lodging. And I think Joe would cut off his head to do good to Mr. Venn."

Big Ben struck twelve.

"There's twelve o'clock. And he will be waiting for me. Good-bye, Philip. I must make haste back."

"Keep our secret, Laura."

"Yes; he said I might. Good-bye."

"Meet me here next Monday. To-day is Friday. I will be here at ten. Will you?"

She took his hand in her frank and honest way, and tripped away. Presently, she came running back.

"Please, Mr. Durnford," she said, "give me some money for a cab. I cannot bear that he should wait for me."

"He." Always Mr. Venn first in her thoughts.

She took a florin from the silver Philip held out to her, and ran out of the park.

He lit a cigar, and strolling round the ornamental water, began to think.

What did he mean to do about the girl?

At this point he hardly knew himself, except that he was madly in love with her. It was but the third time they had met. He loved her. The passion in his heart was born a full flower, almost at first sight. He seemed, now, no longer master of himself, so great and overwhelming was his desire to get this girl for himself. But how? He knew very well that there was little enough left of the original five thousand. How could he marry on a subaltern's pay? How could he take this young lady, with her very remarkable education and history, her quaint and unconventional ideas, and her ignorance of the world, into his regiment? And lastly, how about Mr. Venn? There was another thing. When she accepted him—which she did, as we know, after a fashion quite unknown to fiction and little practised in real life—when she listened to his tale of love, it was all in reference

to Mr. Venn. The very frankness with which the innocent girl had received his suit was galling to a man's pride, especially if it happen to be a man with a strong sense of personal superiority. Had he been a hunchback, had his legs been bowed and his back double, had he been an idiot and a crétin, she could not well have been colder or less encouraging. She did not love him, that was clear; but was he sure that all this innocence was real? Could a London girl be so brought up as to have no sense of the realities of life? Would it be possible that a girl would accept a man, promise to marry him, on the very first offer, solely because her guardian wanted her to marry a gentleman?

Some men's passions are like a furnace, not only because they are so hot and burning, but also because they are only fanned by cold air. Had Laura met her lover's fond vows by any corresponding affection, he would have tired of her in a week. But she did not, as we have seen. Met him with a cold look of astonishment. "Love you? Oh, dear, no. I cannot even tell what you mean by love. Yes, I love Mr. Venn." Amaryllis, pursued by Corydon, laughs in his face, and tells him that she will marry him because she loves Alexis, and Alexis

wants her to marry somebody. And yet poor Corydon loves her still.

Corydon, meditating these things, and trying—to do him justice—to repel and silence certain wicked voices of suspicion and evil prompting which were buzzing in his ears, slowly walked round the ornamental water, and emerged into Pall-mall. On either shoulder was seated a little devil, one of the kind chiefly employed for West-end work—young, but highly promising and well-informed.

“You love her,” said one. “She is young and innocent, unsuspecting and credulous.”

“She does not love you,” said the other; “she only wants to please the man she really loves.”

And so on, amusing themselves as such little imps are wont, while he sauntered along the “sweet shady side,” a prey to all kinds of imaginings and doubts. Perhaps, after all, the imaginings came from the depths of his own brain, and not from any little imps at all; and certainly, the existence of these animals does present enormous difficulties to the speculative philosopher, and since the times of the Rev. Mr. Barham they have not been prominently before the public. If they have any functions to perform in this generation, I should think they are used chiefly to influence men like our

poor Philip—whose strength of will has been corrupted by evil habit, by vanity, by false shame—to draw a veil over what is good, to represent the bad as fatal, inevitable, and not really so bad as has been made out.

Now, as he turned the corner of Waterloo-place, a thing befell him which must really have been the special work of the Chief of the Metropolitan Secret Iniquity Force. I may seem harsh in my judgment, but the event will perhaps justify me.

There came beating across the street, from the corner of Cockspur-street to the far corner of Waterloo-place, with intent to go down Pall-mall, a team of animated sandwiches. With that keen sense of the fitness of things which always distinguishes the profession, they had selected this as the fittest place to advertise a spectacle at the Victoria Theatre. The ways of this curious and little-studied folk afford, sometimes, food for profound reflection. I have seen the bearer of a sandwich, on one side of which was inscribed the legend, "Silence, tremble!" and on the other words more sacred than may here be lightly written, heavily drunk outside a public, while a friend engaged in making known the Coal Hole and the Poses Plastiques was expostulating with him on his immorality. The

perfunctory preacher had not taken his own text to heart. The principle is exactly the same as that by which the Cambridge undergraduate from far Cathay, who confesses that there is but one God and Mohammed is his prophet, passes that barrier to distinction called the Little Go, wherein he has to master Paley's "Evidences of Christianity," and goes back to his native land and to Islam.

This particular procession consisted of thirteen men. On the proud shield which each bore in front and behind was blazoned a scene of almost impossible splendour and magnificence, while a single letter on each enabled the whole to be read by the curious, as the pageant streamed past, as "Titania's Haunt." "Streaming past" is poetical, but scarcely correct. It rather shuffled past. Most of the knights, or esquires—scutiferi—were men well stricken in years, their faces lined with thought, or it may have been experience. After some five or six had passed along, one experienced a feeling as of red noses. Their dress was shabby and dirty; their looks were hopeless and blank; some of them seemed to have once been gentlemen; and the spectator, looking at the men who carried rather than the thing they bore, was touched with a sense of pity and fear.

Poor Helots of our great London. You are paraded, I suspect, by the philanthropists—perhaps it is the great secret unsuspected work of the Society for the Suppression of Vice—who make you carry a shield to hide their intentions and spare you unnecessary shame. They spend their money upon you—not too much, it is true—that we may have before our eyes a constant example of the effects of drink. March! Bands of Hope, with colours flying and music playing; sing “*Sursum, corda,*” and strengthen resolution by speeches and hymns. But on your way home, look at this poor creature of sixty, who was once delicately nurtured and carefully brought up—a scholar and a gentleman—and tremble lest you give way. For the sandwich men mean drink, drink, drink. Better to have these woebegone faces before us as we walk down the street than the Lacedæmonian Helot staggering foolishly in front.

Phil stood and watched them dodging the cabs. One by one they got across that difficult and dangerous corner where there ought to be an island every three yards to protect us. Presently, the bearer of the letter I arrived on the kerb and fell into line. Philip dropped his cigar and started. The man was looking straight before him. His face was perfectly white and

pale, and without hair. His locks were of a silvery white, although he could hardly have been much more than fifty. His nose—a fat, prominent organ—was deeply tinged with red; his mouth was tremulous; crow's-feet lay under his eyes, which were small, bright, and cunning, set beneath light brown or reddish eyebrows. The aspect of the man, with his white hair, smooth face, red nose, and bushy eyebrows, was so remarkable that many people turned to look at him as they passed.

Philip walked with the procession, keeping behind him.

A tall hat, well battered by the storms of life, a thick pea jacket, and a thin pair of Tweed trousers seemed to make all his dress.

Presently, Philip touched him on the shoulder.

The man turned upon him with a glare of terror which to a policeman would have spoken volumes.

Philip looked at him still, but said nothing. He shuffled along with the rest, trembling in every limb. Then Philip touched him on the shoulder again, and said, in a low voice—

“Obsairve, Mr. Alexander MacIntyre.”

The ex-tutor looked at him in a stupid way.

“I know you, man,” said Philip. “Come out of this, and talk.”

They were at the corner of Jermyn-street. To the surprise of his fellows, Letter I suddenly left the line, and dived down Jermyn-street. They waited a little. He was joined by a gentleman; and after a few moments, he slipped his head through the boards, and leaving them on the pavement, hurried away.

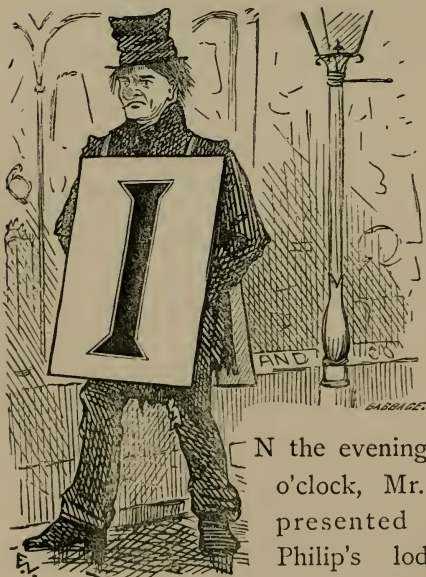
This was what passed.

"You will remember me presently," said Philip. "I am Philip Durnford. There is my card. Get food, clothes, not too much drink, and come to my lodgings at eight o'clock this evening. Here is a sovereign for you."

Mr. MacIntyre spoke not a word, but took the coin and watched his patron go striding away. Then he bit the sovereign to see if it was good—a dreadful proof of his late misfortunes. Then he laughed in a queer way, and looked back at his boards. After that, of course, he went round the corner. Gentlemen down in the world always do. There was a public-house round the corner. He felt in his pocket, where jingled threepence, his little all, and dived into the hostelry. A moment after, he came out, his eyes bright, his mouth firm, his head erect, and walked briskly away.



CHAPTER IX.



IN the evening, about nine o'clock, Mr. MacIntyre presented himself at Philip's lodgings. He was greatly changed for the better. With much prudence he had spent the whole of the sovereign in effecting

an alteration in his outward appearance, calculating that his old pupil would be at least good for two or three more golden tokens of esteem. He was now, looked at from behind, a gentleman of reduced means; everything, from his black coat to his boots, having a second-hand and "reach me down" look, and nothing attaining to what might be called a perfect fit. The coat was obtained by exchange or barter, the old pea jacket having been accepted in lieu of payment; while the other articles were the result of long haggling and beating down. He looked, however, complacently on his new garb, as indicating a partial return to respectability.

Philip greeted him with a friendly shake of the hand.

"Why, man, do you mean to say that a sovereign has done all that?"

"All," said his tutor. "I'll just tell you how I did it. First, the trousers. Saxpence the man allowed for the old ones, which I left with him. They're just dropping to pieces with fatigue. Eh, they've had a hard time of it for many years. Then I got a secondhand flannel shirt. He wouldn't give me anything for the old one. Then I got the coat for my pea jacket—which, though a most comfortable garment, was hardly,

you'll obsairve, the coat for a Master of Arts of an old and respectable Univairsity."

"Well—well. Did you get anything to eat?"

"Dinner. Tenpence. I'm no saying that I'm not hungry."

Philip rang the bell, and ordered some supper, which his guest devoured ravenously.

"Short commons of late, I am afraid?"

"Vera short, vera short! I'll trouble you for two—three more slices of that beef. Ah, Phil, what an animal is the common ox! You feel it when you come to be a stranger to him. And bottled stout. When—eh, man?"

He took a pull which finished the bottle, and proceeded to eat; talking, at intervals, quite in his old style.

"Obsairve. The development of the grateful feeling, commonly supposed to be wanting—thank ye, Phil, one more slice, with some of the fat and a bit of the brown — wanting to the savage races, must be mainly due to the practice of a higher order of eating. My supper has lately been the penny bloater, with a baked potato. No, I really cannot eat any more. The spirit is willing—for I am still hungry, Phil—but the capacity of the stomach is limited. I fear I have already injudiciously crowded the space. Is that brandy, Phil, on the sideboard?"

Philip rose and brought the bottle, with a tumbler and cold water, and placed it before him.

"Brandy," he murmured. "It has been my dream for four long months. I have managed, sometimes, a glass of gin. But brandy!—oh, blessed consoler of human suffering! Brandy!" He was clutching the bottle and standing over it with greedy eyes. "Brandy!—water of life!—no, water that droons the sense of life—that brings us forgetfulness of everything, and restores the fire of youth—stays the gnawings of hunger. Brandy! And they say we musn't drink! Oh, Phil, my favourite pupil, for those who have memories, brandy is your only medicine."

He filled a tumbler half full of spirit, added a little water, and drank it off at a draught. Then he looked round, sighed, sat down, and, to Philip's astonishment, burst into violent sobbing. This phenomenon was quite unprecedented in the history, so far as Philip knew, of his late tutor.

"Nay," he said, kindly, "we shall manage to mend matters somehow. Cheer up, man. Have another glass."

Mr. MacIntyre gave a profound sniff, and looked up through his tears.

"Give me a pocket handkerchief first, Phil. I want to blow my nose. I pawned my last—it was a silk one—for tenpence ha'penny."

Philip brought him one from his bed-room, and he began to mop up.

Then he took another glass of brandy and water.

"Tears—it is indeed a relief to have an old friend to talk to—tears are produced from many causes. There are tears of gratitude, of joy, of sorrow, even of repentance, if you think you are going to be found out. Mine are none of these. They rise from that revulsion o' feeling projuiced by a sudden and strong contrast. Ob-sairve. The man unexpectedly or violently removed from a state of hopeless destitution to the prospect of affluence must either cry or laugh—and not even a philosopher can always choose which. I have got decent clothes, an old friend; and my brains—a little damaged by a hard life, perhaps—are still greatly superior to the average."

"And you have been really destitute?"

"For four months I have been a walking advertisement. Part of the time I was getting eighteenpence a day as one of the Associated Boardmen. Eh, Philip Durnford, think of your old tutor becoming an Associated Boardman!

Then I got dru—I mean I took too much one day, and they turned me out in the cold. I starved a day or two, and then got employment at one-and-threepence, which I have had, off and on, ever since. It is not a difficult employment. There is little responsibility. No sense of dignity or self-respect is required. On the Sunday, there is no work to be done; consequently, for four months I have cursed the Sawbath—the Lord forgive me! Don't ask me too much, Philip: it has been a sad time—a terrible time. I am half-starved. I have had to associate with men of no education and disagreeable habits. A bad time—a bad time." He passed his hand across his forehead, and paused a moment. "A time of bad dreams. I shall never forget it, never. It will haunt me to my grave—poison my nights, and take the pleasure out of my days. Don't ask me about it. Let me forget it."

"Tell me only what you like," said Philip.

"The passions, I have discovered, the follies, and the ambitions of man depend a'togither on the stomach. The hungry man, who has been hungry for three months, can only hope for a good meal. That is the boundary of his thoughts. He envies none but the fat. He has no eyes for beauty. Helen would pass unnoticed

by a sandwich man, only for plumpness. He has no perception of the beauties of nature, save in the streakiness of beef; none for those of art, save in the cookshops. He has no hatred in his heart, nor any love. And of course he has no conscience. Observe, my pupil, that religion is a matter for those who are assured of this world's goods. It vanishes at the first appearance of want. Hence a clause in the Lord's Prayer."

"You—I mean your companions between the boards—are honest, I suppose?"

"Ah, well—that's as it may be. It is one of the advantages of the profession that you must be honest, because you can't run if you do steal anything. No line of life presents fewer opportunities for turning a dishonest penny. Otherwise—you see—stomach is king at all times; and if not satisfied, my young friend, stomach becomes God."

"Tell me, if you can, how you came to fall into these straits."

"Infandum jubes renovare dolorem. Eh!—the Latin tags and commonplaces, how they stick. It is a kind of consolation to quote them. When you saw me last was on that unfortunate occasion when you treated your old tutor with unwarrantable harshness. I have long la-

mented the misconception which led you to that line of conduct. Verbal reproach alone would have been ill-fitting to your lips; but actual personal violence! Ah, Phil! But all is forgiven and forgotten. You went away. I applied to M. de Villeroy for a testimonial. I still preserve the document he was good enough to send me. It is here."

He produced a paper from a bundle which he carried in an old battered pocket-book.

"There are papers here, Phil, that will interest you some day, when you have learned to trust me. Now listen. This is what your poor father's old friend said of your old tutor."

He shook his head in sorrow, and read—

"I have been asked to speak of Mr. MacIntyre's fitness for the post of an instructor of youth. I can assert with truth that I have on several occasions seen him sober; that Mr. Durnford, his late employer, never detected him in any dishonesty; that his morality, in this neighbourhood, has been believed in by no one; and that, in his temperate intervals, he is sometimes industrious."

"There, Philip. Think of that."

"You do not show that testimonial much, I suppose?" said Philip.

"No," replied the philosopher. "I keep it as a proof of the judeecial blindness which sometimes afflicts men of good sense. M. de Villeroi is dead, and so it matters little now. Do you know where Miss Madeleine is?"

"No. In Palmiste, I suppose."

"There ye're wrong. She's in London. I saw her yesterday with an old lady in Regent-street, and followed her home. She's bonny, vera bonny, with her black hair and big eyes. Oh, she's bonny. But uplifted with pride, I misdoubt. Why don't you marry her, Philip? She's got plenty of money. Arthur will marry her if you don't. Give me Arthur's address."

"You want to borrow money of him, I suppose?"

"No. I want just to ask him to *give* me money. Ye're not over-rich, I'm afraid, Philip, yourself, my laddie."

Philip laughed.

"My father gave me five thousand pounds. All that is left of it is in our old agent's hands in Palmiste. I get ten per cent. for it. As I only got a hundred and fifty last February, a good lot of it must be gone. And I've had another little dig into the pile since then."

"Ay, ay?—that's bad; that's vera bad. But

perhaps a time will come for you as well as the rest of the world."

"Arthur can help you, and I dare say will. But you must not tell him too much."

"I do not intend to tell him anything," said the man of experience, loftily. "Except lies."

"Tell me something, however," said Philip. "Tell me how you got into such a hole."

"I went to Australia from Palmiste. Spent all my money in Melbourne, trying to get something to do, and at last I got put into the school of a little township up country, where my chief work was to cane the brats. Such an awfu' set of devils! That lasted a year. Then there came a terrible day."

He stopped and sighed.

"I shall never forget that day. It was a Saturday, I remember. The boys were more mutinous than usual, and I caned them all—there were thirty-five. And when one was caned, the others all shouted and laughed. At twelve, I read the prayers prescribed by the authorities, with my usual warmth and unction. Then I dismissed the boys. Nobody moved. There was a dead silence, and I confess I felt alarmed. Presently, the five biggest boys got up, and approached my desk with determined faces. I had a presentiment of

what would happen, and I turned to flee. It was too late."

"What did they do to you?"

"They tied me up, sir. They tied me up to my own desk, and then they laid on. They gave their reverend dominie the most awful flogging that ever schoolboy had. None too small, sir, to have a cut in. None so forgiving as to shirk his turn. Not one, Philip, relented at the last moment, and spared some of his biceps. Pairfect silence reigned; and when it was over, they placed me back in my chair, with my cane in my hand; and then the school dispersed. What I felt, Philip, more than the ignominy, was the intense pain. A red-hot iron might projuice a similar but not a greater agony, if applied repeatedly on every square inch over a certain area of the body. A thirty-handed Briareus, if he turned schoolmaster, could alone rival the magnitude of that prodeejious cowhiding.

"Next day I left the town. It was during church time; but the boys were waiting for me, and as I stole out with my bundle in my hand, they ran me down the street on a rail, singing 'Drucken Sawnie!' That was a very bad time I had then.

"I tried Sydney after that, and got on pretty well in business—till I failed; and then the

judge wanted to refuse my certificate, because, he said, the books were fraudulently kept. That wasn't true, for they were not kept at all. So I came away, and got to the Cape. A poor place, Phil—very poor, and dull; but the drink is good, and the food is cheap. I learned to speak Dutch, and was very near marrying the daughter of a Dutch farmer, well to do, only for an unlucky accident. Just before the wedding, my cruel fate caused me to be arrested on a ridiculous charge of embezzlement. Of course, I was acquitted; but the judge—who ought to be prosecuted for defamation of character—ruined me by stating that I only got off by the skin of my teeth, because the jury understood English imperfectly. I came back to England, and went down to see my relations. My cousin, only four times removed—the baillie of Auchnatoddy—ordered me out of his house, and wadna give me bite nor sup. Then I came up to town, and here I am, ever since. Ye won't do me an ill turn by telling Arthur my story, will you, Philip?"

"Not I; particularly as you have only told me half of it."

"May be—may be. The other half I keep to myself."

It was as well he did, for among the second half were one or two experiences of prison life,

which might not have added to his old pupil's respect for him. These other adventures he omitted, partly perhaps out of modesty, and partly out of a fear that their importance might be exaggerated.

The astonishing thing was, the way in which he emerged from all his troubles. They seemed to be without any effect upon his energies or spirits. Utterly careless about loss of character, perfectly devoid of moral principle, he came up, after each disaster, seemingly refreshed by the fall. Mother Earth revived him; and he started anew, generally with a few pounds in his pocket, and always some new scheme in his head, to prey upon the credulity of good and simple men. That he had not yet succeeded, argued, he considered, want of luck rather than absence of merit.

His projects were not of very extraordinary cleverness. But he was unscrupulous enough to succeed. Cleverness and freedom from scruples do somehow seem the two main requisites to produce the success of wealth. The cleverest rogue becomes the richest man, often the most revered. He has been known, for instance, to get into the House of Lords. Mr. Gladstone will always, if he spends £20,000 on the cause, make him a baronet. But quite lately a new

feeling had come over Mr. MacIntyre. He was beginning to doubt himself. For four months he had lived on about three half-crowns a week, and as the days went on, and he saw no chance of escape, he grew more and more despondent. It was a new sensation, this of privation. He suffered, for the first time in his life. And also, for the first time, he saw no way to better things—no single spot of blue in all the horizon. Rheumatic twinges pinched him in the shoulders. He was fifty-three years of age. He had not a penny saved, nor a friend to give him one. In the evening he crept back to his miserable lodging, brooding over his fate; and in the morning he crept out again to his miserable work, brooding still.

But now a change, unexpected and sudden. *Hinc illæ lacrimæ.* Hence those tears of the tutor, wrung from a heart whose power of philosophy was undermined by a long-continued emptiness of stomach. That night he slept on Philip's sofa; and the next day, after taking a few necessities—such as a shirt, a waistcoat, collar, and so on—from his benefactor's wardrobe, making philosophical reflections all the while, he devoured a breakfast of enormous dimensions, and proceeded to call upon Arthur.

"Ye'll remember, Mr. Philip Durnford," he

said, putting on his hat—"by the way, lend me two or three pounds, which I shall repay from what I get from Arthur: I must have a better hat—ye'll remember to forget the little confidential narrative I imparted to you last night. It is not always possible to preserve the prudence of a philosopher, and to know what things should be said and what concealed—*quæ dicenda, quæ celanda sint*. I told you more than I should. But I trust to your promise."

He found Arthur at work in his usual purposeless way. That is, he was surrounded by a great pile of books, and had a pen in his hand. Arthur was not happy unless he was following up some theory or investigating some "point," and had a Sybaritish way of study which led to no results, and seemed to promise nothing: a kind of work which very often lands the student among the antiquarians and archæologists. But there was a tone about Arthur which impressed Mr. MacIntyre with a sense of constraint and awkwardness. Philip he somehow felt to belong to his own stratum of humanity. With Philip he was at ease, and could talk familiarly. Arthur belonged to that higher and colder level where self-respect was essential, and any confidences of the criminal Christian would be out of place. Philip, for instance, had insisted upon his forti-

fyng his stomach against the rawness of the morning air with a glass of brandy before going out. Arthur, on the other hand, offered him nothing; but, giving him a chair, stood leaning against the mantelshelf, and contemplating his visitor from his height of six feet.

"I hope you are doing well, Mr. MacIntyre," he began.

"I am not doing well," replied the Scotchman—"I'm doing very badly."

"I do not ask your history since I saw you last."

"Mr. Arthur Durnford, you are my old pupil—I may add, my favourite pupil—and you are privileged to say what you please. My life is open to any question you may like to ask. The failure of a school in Australia, through my—my firmness in maintaining discipline; that of a prosperous place of business in Sydney, through an unexpected rise in the Bank rate; and the breakdown of my plans in Cape Town, brought me home in a condition of extreme penury. From this I was rescued by the generosity of Lieutenant Philip Durnford, who has most liberally assisted me out of his very slender means—his very slender means. Ask me any questions you like, Mr. Durnford; but do not, if you please, insinuate that I have anything to conceal."

He smote his chest, and assumed an air of Spartan virtue.

"Well, well. Only, the fact is, Mr. MacIntyre, I remember that the last time I saw you, you were receiving punishment from Philip's hands for some disgraceful proposals."

"Pardon me—Mr. Philip was under a mistake. This, I believe, he will now acknowledge. I have forgiven him."

"I hope he was mistaken. Anyhow, my opinion of you, formed as a boy, could not possibly be favourable."

"At the time you speak of, I was suffering from deepsomania. I am now recovered, thanks to having taken the pledge for a term of years. Now expired."

"What are you doing now?"

"Nothing."

"What have you been doing?"

"Starving."

"What do you want to do?"

"I want you to find me some money. I cannot promise to pay it back, because I am too poor to promise anything. But if you will advance me fifty pounds, I think I can do something with it."

Arthur took his cheque-book, and sat down, thoughtfully.

"I will do this for you. I will lend you fifty pounds, which, as you are a thrifty man, ought to last you six months. You will spend that time in looking about you, and trying to get work. At the end of six months, if you want it, I will lend you another fifty. But that is all I will do for you. And I shall specially ask Philip not to give you money."

Mr. MacIntyre was not profuse in his thanks. He took the cheque, examined it carefully, folded it, and put it in his pocket.

"I knew you'd help me," he said. "I told Philip so this morning. Can I forward you in your studies now? The pheelosophical system of Hamilton, for instance."

"Yes; never mind my studies, if you please. Is there anything else I can do for you?"

"I do not ca' to mind that there is. I'll look in again, when there is. Have you seen Miss Madeleine, Mr. Durnford, since she came to London?"

"Madeleine? No. Is she in London? What is her address? — how long has she been here?"

"I dare say I could find out her address. But it might cost money."

He looked so cunning as he said this, that Arthur burst out laughing.

"You are a cool hand, Mr. MacIntyre. How much would it cost?—five pounds?"

"Now, really, Mr. Arthur, to suppose that a man can run all over London for five pounds! And that to find the address of your oldest friend."

"Well, twenty pounds? — thirty pounds? Hang it, man, I must know."

"I should think," said the philosopher, meditating, "it *might* be found for forty pounds, if the money was paid at once."

Arthur wrote another cheque, which MacIntyre put into his pocket-book as before.

"This does not prejudice the fifty pounds in six months' time?" he said. "Very well. I remember now that I have her address in my pocket. I followed her home and asked a servant. Here it is—No. 31, Hatherley-street, Eaton-square."

"Did you speak to her?"

"Is it likely?" replied Mr. MacIntyre, thinking of his boards.

"Confess that you have done a good stroke of business this morning," said Arthur. "Ninety pounds is not bad. You can't always sell an address for forty pounds."

"Sell an address? My dear sir, you mistake me altogether. Do not, if you please, imagine

that I am one of those who sell such little information as I possess. Remember, if you please, that you are addressing a Master of Arts of an ancient—”

“You are quite yourself again, Mr. MacIntyre,” said Arthur. “Good morning, now. Keep away from drink, and—”

“Sir, I have already reminded you that—”

“Good morning, Mr. MacIntyre.”

He went away, cashed both his cheques, and, taking lodgings, proceeded to buy such small belongings as the simplest civilization demands—such as a hair brush, linen, and a two-gallon cask of whisky. Then he ordered the servant to keep a kettle always on the hob ; sat down, rubbed his hands, lit a pipe, and began to meditate.





CHAPTER X.

IT was quite true. Madeleine was in England.

Eight years since, Madeleine, before leaving her native island, had ridden over to Fontainebleau to take farewell of a place where she had spent so many happy days. The house was uninhabited and shut up, but the manager of the estates was careful to keep it in repair. It all looked as it used to. The canes, clean and well kept, waving in the sunlight, in green and yellow and gray; the mill busier than ever, with its whirr of grinding wheels; the sweet, rich smell of the sugar; the huge vats of seething, foaming juice, and the whirling turbines. But the old verandah was no longer strewn with its cane mats and chairs; and when the doors were opened for her, the house felt chill and damp.

She lifted the piano lid and touched the keys, shrinking back with a cry of fright. It was like a voice from the dead—so cracked, and thin, and strident was the sound. In the boys' study were their old school-books lying about, just as they had left them; in a drawer which she opened, some paper scribbled with boyish sketches. One of these represented a gentleman, whose features were of an exaggerated Scotch type, endeavouring to mount his pony. The animal was turning upon him with an air of reproach, as one saying, "Sir, you are drunk again." This was inscribed at the back, "Philippus fecit." Then there was another and more finished effort, signed Arthur, of a girl's head in chalk. Perhaps the merit of this picture was slender; but Madeleine blushed when she looked at it, and took both pictures away with her.

There was no other souvenir that she cared to have; and leaving the house, she paid a visit to the garden. Oh, the garden! Where once had been pineapples were pumpkins; where had been strawberries were pumpkins; where there had once been flower beds, vegetables, or shrubs, were pumpkins. Pumpkin was king. He lay there—green, black, or golden—basking in the sun. He had devoured all, and spread himself over all.

So Madeleine came away; and under the maternal wing of the Bishopess—whose right reverend husband, as happens once in two years to all colonial bishops, had business connected with his diocese which brought him to England—was duly shipped to Southampton, and presently forwarded to Switzerland.

Education. Her guardian was a Frenchman by descent, a Swiss by choice. He had enlarged views, and brought up the girl as a liberal Protestant. He had her taught the proper amount of accomplishments. He made her talk English, though with a slight foreign accent, as well as French; and, what was much more important, gave her ideas as to independence and unconventionality which sank deep, and moulded her whole character. Insomuch that one day she announced her intention of going away and setting up for herself.

"I am of age," she said. "I want to see the world a little. I want to make up my mind what to do with myself."

Old M. Lajardie chuckled.

"See what it is," he observed, "to bring up a girl as she ought to be brought up. My dear, if it had not been for me, you would at this moment be wanting to go into a convent."

She shook her head.

"I know the sex, child. You belong to the class which takes to religion like a duck to water. This being denied you, you will take to philanthropy, usefulness, all sorts of things. That is why I taught you English, because England is the only country possible for a full exercise of these virtues. Then you are of a temperament which would have induced blind submission in a man, and makes a delightful obstinacy in a free woman."

"Upon my word, my dear guardian—"

"And then, my child, there is another quality in you, which would have made you the most rapturous of sisters, which will make you the best and most devoted of wives. You will marry, Madeleine."

"It is possible," she said. "It may come in my way, as it does in most people's lives. But I do not count upon marriage as a part of my life."

"You are rich, Madeleine. You have—well, more than your fair share of beauty. Black hair and black eyes are common; but not such splendid hair as yours, or eyes as bright. There are girls as tall as you, but few with so good a figure."

"Don't, guardian," said Madeleine, with a little moue and a half-blush. "I would rather you told me of my faults."

"I know the sex, I tell you," repeated the old man. "When I was young—ah, what a thing it is to be young!—I made a profound study of the sex. It is quite true, Madeleine, though I am only an old man who says it, that even Madame Recamier herself, in her best days, had not a more finished style than yours. You will succeed, my child. You will be able to marry any one—any one you please."

"You do not imagine, I suppose, that I am to fall in love with the first rich young man who tells me that he loves me? As if there was nothing in the world for woman to think of but love."

"Most women," went on her critic, "like to be married to a lord and master. I prophecy for you, Madeleine, that your husband will be content to obey rather than to command. So, child, you shall see the world. Let me only just write to our friend, Mrs. Longworthy, who will act as your chaperon. You will find yourself richer than you think, perhaps. All your money is in the English funds, and the interest has been used to buy fresh stock. Go now, my ward—I will think over what is best to be done."

The old man attended her to the door, and, shutting it after her, went through a little

pantomime of satisfaction. That done, he took down a volume of Voltaire's "Philosophical Dictionary," and wagged his head over the wisdom that he found therein.

"Independent," he murmured. "Rich, self-reliant, able to think, not superstitious, not infected with insular prejudices, philanthropic, beautiful. She will do. Elle ira loin, mon ami," he said, tapping his own forehead. "You have done well. When revolutions come, and lines of thought are changed, it is good to have such women at hand, to steady the men. France rules the world, and the women rule France. Hein? it sounds epigrammatic. Has it been said before?"

So to England Madeleine came. A chaperon was found for her in the widow of an old friend of M. Lajardie—a certain Mrs. Longworthy, who was willing—and, more than that, able—to take her into society. They took one of those extremely comfortable little houses—the rent of which is so absurdly out of proportion to their size—close to Eaton-square: a house with its two little drawing-rooms and greenhouse at the back—a little narrow as regards dining-room accommodation, but broad enough, as Mrs. Longworthy put it, for two lone women.

Madeleine's chaperon was only remarkable

for her extraordinary coziness and love of comfort. A cushiony old lady—one who sat by the fireside and purred; and, when things went badly with her, went to bed and stayed there till they came round again. An old lady who went to church every Sunday, and, like the late lamented Duke of Sussex, murmured after each commandment, “Never did that: never did that.” So that the rules of prohibition did not affect her own conscience. For all the rest, she entirely trusted and admired Madeleine, and never even ventured on a remonstrance with her.

Madeleine was what her guardian described her. In her presence most men felt themselves above their own stratum. There was a sort of gulf; and yet, with all the men’s experience, the clear light of her eyes seemed to read so far beyond their actual ken. If she liked you, and talked to you, you came away from her strengthened and braced up. Beautiful, she certainly was, in a way of her own: striking, the women called her—a word which the sex generally employ when they feel envious of power and physique beyond their own. Rolls of black hair; a pale and colourless cheek; a small and firm mouth; clear and sharply defined nostrils; eyes that were habitually limpid and

soft, which yet might flash to sudden outbreaks of storm; and a figure beyond all expression gracieuse. A woman who could talk; one whom young warriors, having to take her in to dinner, speedily felt beyond them altogether; one who lifted a man up, and made him breathe a purer air. This is, I take it, the highest function of woman. We cannot, as a rule, run comfortably in single harness, but are bound by the laws of our being to have a mate of some kind. It is surely best for us to find one whose sense of duty is stronger than our own, and whose standard is higher. We may have to do all the work; but we want a fellow in the harness to show us that the work is good, and that it behoves us to do it well.

Madeleine was not, it is certain, one of the girls whom a certain class of small poets love to style "darling," "pet Amoret," "sweet little lily." Not for any man's toy; no animated doll to please for a while, and then drop out of life; nor yet that dreadful creature, a "woman's rights" woman. Perhaps she was not clever enough.

Arthur Durnford called upon her the same day on which he got the address. He was a little prepared to gush, remembering the little sylph with whom he used to play twelve years ago. But there was no opportunity for gushing.

The stately damsel who rose and greeted him with almost as much coldness as if they had parted the day before, silenced, if she did not disconcert, him.

"I knew that we should meet again some time," she said; "and I had already written to Palmiste for your address. Mrs. Longworthy, this is my old friend, Arthur Durnford, of whom I have so often told you."

He saw a little, fat old lady, with a face like a winter apple, crinkled and ruddy, sitting muffled up by the fireside.

"Come and shake hands with me, Arthur Durnford," she cried, in the pleasantest voice he had ever heard. "I knew your father when he was a wild young fellow in the Hussars. Let me look at you. Yes, you are like him. But he had black hair, and yours is brown. And you stoop—I suppose because you read books all day. Fie upon the young men of the present! They all read. In my time there was not so much reading, I can tell you, but a great deal more love-making and merriment. Now, sit down and talk to Madeleine."

She lay back on her cushions, and presently fell fast asleep, while the two talked.

They talked of Palmiste and the old days. And then a sort of constraint came upon them,

because the new days of either were unknown.

"Tell me about yourself, Arthur," said Madeleine. "I am going to call you Arthur, and you shall call me Madeleine, just as we used to. Mrs. Longworthy—oh, she is asleep."

"No, my dear—only dozing. Wake me up by telling me something pleasant."

"I was going to tell Arthur that I am sure you would like him to come here a great deal—I should."

"That ought to be enough, Mr. Durnford. But I should, too. We are a pair of women, and we sometimes sit and nag at each other. Don't look at me so, Maddy—if we don't actually do it, we sometimes want to. Come a great deal, Mr. Durnford. Come as nearly every day as you can manage. It is very good for young men to have ladies' society. We shall civilize you."

"You are very kind," Arthur began.

"But I must say one thing. Do not come early in the morning. I consider that the day ought to be a grand processional triumph of temper. That is why I always take my breakfast in bed. Handle me delicately in the morning, and a child may lead me all day. Come, if you want to see *me*, in time for luncheon, at

two; if you want to see Madeleine, at any time she tells you."

"And how is Philip?" asked Madeleine.

"Who is Philip?" said Mrs. Longworthy.

"My cousin, the son of my father's brother."

"Your father, my dear boy, never had any brothers."

"Pardon me, Mrs. Longworthy."

She shook her head, and lay back again.

"And what is your profession, Arthur?"

"I have none."

"What do you do with yourself?"

"I waste time in the best way I can. I read, write a little, make plans, and the days slip by."

"That seems very bad. Come and help me in my profession."

"What is your profession?"

"Come some morning at ten, and I will tell you. Send Philip to call upon me."

As Arthur went out of the room, he heard Mrs. Longworthy saying—

"I am not wrong. I am quite right. George Durnford was an only son. And so was his father. The De Melhuyns, quite new people, told me all about it."

A sudden light flashed upon Arthur's mind. He *knew*, in that way in which knowledge of this sort sometimes comes, that Philip was his

half-brother. He was certain of it. He reasoned with himself; set up all the objections; proved to himself that the preponderance of chances was against it; marshalled all the opposite evidence; and remained absolutely certain of the truth of his conviction.





CHAPTER XI.



UT Arthur went round, the same evening, to Philip's lodgings.

"How much did MacIntyre charge you for Madeleine's address?" asked the man of larger experience.

Arthur coloured—

“Well, we did drive a bargain. Why did you not send it to me?”

“First, because I did not possess it; secondly, because, if I had, MacIntyre was so entirely frank with me as to what he intended, that it would have gone to my heart to spoil his little game. Tell me how Madeleine is looking.”

“Here is the address. Go and see her yourself.”

“Is she milk and water? But of course—”

“Go and see her yourself.”

“I don’t know that I shall, Arthur. We are different, you and I. You are an eligible parti—I am only a detrimental.”

“But, my dear fellow, there is no question of that sort of thing. Madeleine is not like the ordinary girls you meet.”

“Oh,” said Philip, “is she not? I don’t go into society much myself, because I feel out of my element in that rank of life in which my fortunes allow me to circulate. The domestic business, with the conventional young woman, lacquered with accomplishments which get rubbed off when the babies come; the piano for the last new piece, and the song for the dear creature who breathes hard and thinks she sings; the mind without an idea outside the

narrow circle in which it has been trained—I do not think, Arthur, that my idea of happiness is quite this.”

“Well, well; but all women are not so. Madeleine is not.”

“Give me,” he went on—“give me some girl brought up out of ladies’ circles and women’s ways: brought up by a man: full of ideas, thoughts, and quaint fancies; pretty, in a way that the Tyburnian misses are not pretty; able to talk, able to amuse you, able to please you, when the little stock of accomplishments is all run through.”

He was thinking of Lollie.

“A lady, and not brought up by ladies?” said Arthur.

“I was in ‘society’ the other day: five and twenty young ladies, whispering bitter things of each other, bursting with envy and malice. I want a girl who does not look on all other girls as rivals and enemies. I talked to one of them.”

“You did not expect the poor girl to pour out her soul at the first interview.”

“She had very little to pour. That little was poured. I came away early.”

“That is not society. Come with me to see Madeleine.”

The other, who was in his bitterest mood, sneered in reply—

“They are all alike. Every woman wants to be admired more than other women in the room. That is the first thing. Without that, there is no real happiness. Then they want to be rich: not because they may live well, for they do not understand eating and drinking: not for the sake of art, because they only know the art chatter. If they felt art, do you think they would dress as they do? No, sir; they want money in order to make their acquaintance envious. For themselves, what a woman desires and likes most in the world is to be kept warm. Give the squaw her blanket, or the lady her cushion, and she is happy. Warmth, wealth, admiration: those are the three things she desires. What can we expect? Read the literature about women, from Anacreon to the comic papers. We have conspired together against the sex. We have agreed to keep them foolish and vain—to limit their aspirations to dress; and deuced well we have succeeded.”

Arthur laughed.

“Take the Newgate Calendar, Phil, to represent manhood, if you like. Just as well exaggerate the faults of women and make them represent womanhood. Women love admiration

because it is an instinct. Their influence is through their beauty. It is a net spread by nature to entrap and catch men, in order that they may be led heavenwards. Wild beasts, like you, who prefer the woods, full of pitfalls and snares, to the soft green glades—”

“Rubbish,” said Philip.

“Not rubbish at all. Don’t despise women—don’t cry them down. Go in for marrying, and try the domestic happiness you declaim against.”

“All which means that you are *épris* with Madeleine yourself, I suppose. It is, perhaps, the best thing you can do. But look at the other side of the picture. Suppose that what we call the highest kind of life—by which you mean, I take it, the calm cultivation of all that is artistic, unbiassed by passion and undisturbed by regrets—is out of your reach, because you can’t afford it, don’t you think it prudent to say, ‘Young man, you are not intended to marry. Do not be an accomplice in the production of a generation of paupers. On the other hand, get as much as you can out of life with the resources at your disposal.’”

“Every man may lead the higher life.”

“Perhaps, if he remains unmarried. What kind of higher life is that in which one trembles

at the butcher's bill, and eats out his heart thinking of the children's future? And, besides, your higher life—what is it? Bah! Wine, love, song! Get what you can, and leave the gods the rest. It is their care, I suppose—this 'rest,' whatever it is."

But he did call on Madeleine. Went to see her the very next day. Madeleine was alone, as it was one of Mrs. Longworthy's sick days—or, as she put it, one of those days when temper got the better of her.

Madeleine was not so unconstrained with him as with Arthur. Perhaps it was something in his look—perhaps the memory of old childish quarrels. People very seldom take kindly in after-life to those who have teased them as children. She was colder than to Arthur—asked but few questions of him, and turned the conversation on things general. Philip, in his unhappy way, chafed at his reception, because he knew how Arthur had been welcomed—putting it down as due to that fatal taint of blood.

"Do you like the army as a profession?" asked Madeleine.

"There is not much to like or dislike in it," he replied, carelessly. "It does to carry one along."

"To carry one along—yes, but not as the

highest object of one's life, I suppose you mean?"

"I certainly did not mean that," replied Philip. "I know nothing about highest objects in life. My life consists in getting as much enjoyment as my income will admit. Very low aims, indeed, are they not?"

"Yes."

"At the same time, suppose I was to go in for the higher kind—very odd thing, Arthur is always talking about the higher life—I suppose I should do it because I enjoyed it best. Do you not think so?"

"Yes. But one ought not to be thinking about enjoyment."

"Pardon me—I only said that one *does* think about enjoyment."

"There is duty, at least," said Madeleine.

"Yes—my duties are light and easily fulfilled. When I have got through those, there is nothing left but to fill up the time, as I said, with as much amusement, enjoyment, frivolity, whatever you like, as my money will cover. As we are old acquaintances, Madeleine, it is just as well that I should not pretend to anything but what I am. Now, tell me, if I may be impertinent, what you think I ought to do?"

"I don't know," she said. "Life is so terrible

a thing at best, so full of responsibilities, of evils that must be faced, and dreadful things that cannot be suppressed, that I don't know what to say. It seems to me as if the whole duty of the rich man—"

"I am not a rich man."

"The man of leisure—the man of culture, were to throw himself among the people, and try to raise them—"

"You would make us all philanthropists, then?"

"I hardly know. If only—without societies and organizations—people would go among the poor and teach them: help, without money, you know. But one can only do oneself what one feels right."

Here, at least, was a woman different from the type he had set up the preceding night—different, too, from Laura.

"You are talking to a mere man of the world," said Philip, rising. "We have no ideas of duty, you know—only a few elementary rules of right and wrong, which we call the laws of honour. My friends, for instance, always pay up after each event. On the other hand, it is dangerous to have to do with them in the matter of horses—and they will take any advantage that fairly offers in the way of a bet. We like gathering in

club smoking-rooms, drinking good wine, smoking good cigars. We like to be well dressed, to do certain things well, such as riding, billiard playing, and so forth—”

“But, Philip, does not this life tire you?”

“I assure you, not in the least. Greatly as I must fall in your eyes by the confession, I declare that I do not care one straw for my fellow-man. You tell me the people are starving. I say, there are poor-rates, rich men, and our luxurious staff of parsons, beadles, and relieving officers to help them. You say they are badly taught. Where, then, are the schools? I meet with the poor man in the street, and read of him in the paper. He has, it appears to me, two phases in his character. He either fawns or bullies. He begs or tries to rob. I am told that he gets large wages in the summer, which he spends in drink, and has nothing left for the winter. If I were a poor man, and knew that I should be pitied by charitable people directly I was hard up, I should do just the same thing. What is the poor man to me? I owe him nothing. I do not employ him. I do not get rich by his labour. Therefore, you see, I am quite indifferent to his sufferings, quite awake to his vices, and quite careless about his virtues.”

Madeleine looked at him with astonishment.

"You are frank, indeed," she said. "But believe me, you are quite wrong. I must teach you that the poor, whom you despise, are not worse than ourselves—better than your friends, if I may say so, because they help each other, and have sympathy. Why are you so frank? Why have you told me so much about yourself?"

"Because I am anxious that you should know me as I am," replied Philip.

"But I am sorry you told me what you are. After all, you have exaggerated. I shall wait for a woman's love to soften you."

A wondrously softened look did pass over Philip's eyes. He was thinking of the girl whom he was to meet the next day.

"Love," he said, "the old story. If I am to be reformed, I would rather meet my fate that way than any other. Forgive my bluntness, Madeleine. You see I do not belong to your world."

"But do belong to my world. It really is a better one than yours. Of course, we have our little faults; and we may be slow for you, and sometimes—what is it, that quality for which the French have no word, because they never

understand it?—what is it that people are when they not only do their duty, but overdo it?"

"You mean your world is sometimes priggish."

"That is the word—not a lady's word, I know; but Mrs. Longworthy tells me when I make mistakes. And this word does so beautifully fit its meaning. Yes, priggish. Only English and Germans are that, I cannot tell why. But come into my world."

Philip shook his head.

"You are on one side of the stream, and I am on the other, and the stream is widening. Arthur is on your side, too. We can still talk. The time may come when the river will be so wide that we cannot even do that."

"I think I know what you mean," she replied. "Cross at once, and stay with us—with those who—who love you, in memory of old days."

"You cannot cross a river," he said, smiling, "without a bridge or a boat. Just at present I see none. The bridges are all higher up, behind me; and so are the boats. And the two paths are getting farther and farther apart. Good-bye, Madeleine."

He left her with these words. Very oddly, they recall my illustration from the works of Pythagoras a few chapters back. That must be because "*les esprits forts se rencontrent*."

"Tell me," said Mrs. Longworthy, at dinner "what kind of man is this Mr. Philip Durnford."

"He is not so tall as Arthur, has black hair, a black moustache, and large, soft eyes—almond-shaped eyes."

"Oh! Did you ever see eyes like his anywhere else?"

"Yes; they are like the eyes of the mulattoes in Palmiste."

"Humph!" said Mrs. Longworthy.

"He dresses very well, and he talks very well. Only, my dear Mrs. Longworthy, you know what I told you about the garden at Fontainebleau, when I saw it last."

"Yes."

"Well, Philip Durnford's mind is like that garden—all overgrown with pumpkins."





CHAPTER XII.

LET us have," said Venn, trimming the lamp on Chorus night, "a cheerful evening. What fresh disappointment has any one to communicate?"

"A lawyer," said Lynn, "who would have sent me some cases has absconded with other people's money. That is all that has happened to me."

"He may possibly come back," said Jones. "My manager, who had accepted my play, is a bankrupt. Perhaps Setebos, who troubles everything, ruined him to prevent the play coming out. I mourn for him.

'He was not fair to outward view;
He was not nice to see:
His loveliness I never knew
Until he smiled on me.'

"As an honorary member of the Chorus," said Arthur, "I can hardly be expected to have any misfortunes—consequently, I have none."

"This," said Venn, with a beaming face, "is quite like old times. I, too, have had my disappointment. I had spent the last twelve months in revising and polishing the *Opuscula*. They are now as complete as a Greek statue. I proposed them to a publisher. He kept my letter for a month, and then sent me a refusal. It is his loss pecuniarily, the world's loss intellectually."

"It is very sad," sympathized Jones. "And yet, I dare say, you would not exchange your literary fame for my dramatic glory?"

"One great compensation of affliction," Venn observed, "is the law of self-esteem. No man, whatever his drawbacks, would change with any other man. We admire ourselves for our very afflictions. We lie on our bed of torture till even the red-hot gridiron becomes a sort of spring mattress; and then we pity the poor devils grilling next to us. Following out this idea, as I intend to do, I shall write a life of that Jew whose teeth King John pulled out day by day. I shall show that he rather enjoyed it as he got on, and looked for it every morning, till the teeth were all gone. Then he

talked about it for the rest of his life. So, too, the old woman, who hugs her rheumatism to her heart."

"Ourselves are too much with us: late and soon,
Still at the mirror do we waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours.
We give ourselves our praise—a sordid boon."

Jones made the above remark, which fell unnoticed.

"Another compensation," said Lynn, "may be got from the magnitude of misfortunes. To have had more funerals than anybody else confers a distinction on any woman. To have had more MSS. rejected than anybody else confers a distinction upon you, my dear Venn."

"Let us change the subject," Venn replied, with a blush, showing that he felt the delicacy of the compliment. "I have now to submit to the Chorus a scheme by which all our fortunes may be made."

He drew forth a bulky manuscript, tied with tape. They all rose, and began to look for their hats, with one accord.

Venn replaced the roll in the drawer with a sigh.

"You may sit down again," he said. "You will be sorry, some time, not to have heard the prolegomena to the scheme. But I will only

read the prospectus. You are aware, perhaps, that a million a year is collected for the Conversion of the Blacks."

"It is a fact over which, in penniless moments, I have often brooded," said Jones.

"Then," said Venn, triumphantly, "let us raise the same sum for converting the Whites."

"What are we to convert them to?"

"I shall give nothing for converting anybody," Lynn growled.

"Don't talk like an atheist, Lynn; because this is a philanthropic scheme, and, besides, one out of which money may be made. We shall Christianize the world. We shall teach the people that their religion needs not consist in going to church every Sunday, and sometimes reading a 'chapter.' We shall begin with the House of Lords. There is a great field open among the peers and their families. The House of Commons—which comes next upon my list—will, after a few years' labour among them, be so changed that the constituents won't know their own members again. No more putting into office because a man makes himself disagreeable out of it; no more bolstering a measure because it is brought forward by a minister; no more legislating for class interests; no more putting off for a better day. And, above all, a stern

sense of Christian duty which will limit every speaker to ten minutes, like a Wesleyan preacher at a field meeting. Next to the House of Commons, we shall take the Inns of Court. Oh, my readers——”

“You are quite sure that you are not quoting from the prolegomena?” said Jones.

“Pardon me—I was about to delight you with perhaps as fine a piece of declamation as you have ever heard. Now you shall not have it. The Inns of Court will be taken by a series of door-to-door visitations; and the missionaries, who will not be highly paid, will receive special allowances for repairs to that part of their dress most likely to be injured. If one converts a barrister, he shall be promoted to the conversion of the bench. If one converts a judge, he shall be still further promoted to the conversion of certain ex-Lord Chancellors. In the army, after a few months of our work, you will find so great a change that the officer will actually work at his profession; the same rules will be maintained for officers as for men—those about getting drunk, and so forth. And in the navy, similar good effects will be produced. The best results will be obtained in the trading classes. For then the grocer will no more sand his sugar and mix his tea; the publican will sell honest

drink; and all shall be contented with a modest profit."

"Of course," said Lynn, "the missionaries will behave in exactly the same way as if they were at Jubbulpore or Timbuctoo—go in and out, uninvited; and, like district visitors, they will make any impertinent observations they please?"

"Of course; and the consequences will be part of the day's work."

"I quite approve of the scheme," said Jones. "Only, I don't see my own share in it."

"You are to be secretary, Jones. It is your name that we shall put forward."

"Then I retire."

"Do not, Jones, let a promising scheme be ruined at the very outset by an obstinate selfishness. What matters it if the world does scoff?"

But Jones was obdurate.

"Then, Jones, you shall have nothing, while Lynn and I will divide all the profits. I go on to a second scheme. This will not be so lucrative, but still safe. It is nothing less, gentlemen, than the establishment of a Royal Literary College—a college devoted to the art and mystery of writing—not, understand, for the old and worn-out purposes of conveying thought,

but for the modern purpose of conveying amusement."

"It sounds well," said Jones. "Of course, as it is the project of the Chorus, it will fail.

'Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do ye fall so fast?'"

"And now listen to the prospectus, which you will find to be drawn up with great care.

"'ROYAL LITERARY COLLEGE.

"'The promoters of this institution, bearing in mind the enormous increase in the population, the consequent increase in the number of readers, and the necessity of providing for their daily, weekly, and monthly requirements, propose to establish a college expressly for the training of popular mediocrity. They have observed with pain that, in spite of the efforts of able editors, a great deal of time is still spent in providing papers containing thought. And though a large number of these leaders of popular amusement care nothing for the merits of a paper, provided it be written by a well-known man, there are yet a few who study to present their readers with what they require least—food for reflection. Among other objects, it is proposed to prevent this lamentable waste of time and energy; and, in doing so, to anticipate the

tastes of the age and the wants of the reading public. Literature, in fact, is to be reduced to a science. The increased demand for literary men by no means represents an increased supply of genius. On the contrary, the promoters are of serious opinion that genius was never at so low an ebb as at present, and the art of writing upon nothing, although it has not yet been systematically taught, never at so high a pitch. In order to convince themselves of this, the promoters, by means of a sub-committee, have carefully studied the whole popular literature of the last twelve months. They are happy in being able to report that there has not been, so far as their labours have permitted them to discover, a single new truth introduced to the British public, not a single good thing said, nothing old newly set, and not one good poem by a new man. This they consider highly satisfactory and gratifying. And it is in the hope of perpetuating, improving, and extending this state of things, that they desire to found the Royal Literary College.

“In the ordinary course of events, it cannot be but that an occasional genius will arise. Should such appear by any accident among the students of the college, he will be promptly and firmly expelled. But the college will

gladly welcome any one, of either sex, who, having a quick memory and a facile pen, is quite justified in considering himself a genius; and every allowance will be made for the weaknesses of humanity, should any student give himself, or herself, the airs of genius.

“As students of both sexes will be admitted within the college, the promoters, considering how great a stimulus poverty is to work, will encourage, by every means in their power, early marriages. In case of husband and wife being both students, arrangements will be made to enable them to starve together, with their innocent progeny, outside the college walls. No chaplain will be appointed, as the promoters desire to consider the college quite undenominational. In deference, however, to popular opinion, a chapel will be built, in which service will be held on Sundays, in as many Christian denominations as time permits. The hall will be set apart for the more advanced thinkers, who will not, however, be allowed to smoke during the delivery of orations.

“The great festivals of the College will be Commemoration Day, Old Dramatist Day, Old Chronicle Day, Scandalous Chronicle and Memoirs Day, Horace Walpole Day, Boswell Day, and French Play Day. On these days will be

celebrated the names of those great men who, by their writings, have furnished models for copying, or provided storehouses for plagiarists. Every student will be expected to produce a panegyric in his own line. Those which, in the opinion of the examiners, have most merit—from the Literary College point of view—will be printed and kept for one month. The successful students will read them out in the college hall; but no one will be compelled to listen.

“‘There will be no holidays or vacations. Every student will absent himself as often as he pleases. On Sundays, conveyances will be provided for intending excursionists.

“‘The college library will not, on any account, receive the works of the college students.

“‘In the examinations for scholarships and degrees, if any composition, in the eyes of the examiners, should be found to partake of the nature of philosophy, research or erudition; or should the reading of any composition demand the exercise of thought; or should any reflect on the glory and dignity of light literature, the offender shall be publicly reprimanded, and, on a repetition of the offence, shall be disgracefully expelled. No objection will be made to the offering up of prayers for any erring student.

“The college will be divided into several sections. These, which are not yet quite settled, will be somewhat as follows :—

“I. POETRY.—Students will be recommended to take a year's course at this, after the regular three years at any of the other branches. Several gentlemen will be invited to lecture from time to time. Mr. Browning on the Art of Obscurity and Apparent Depth; also on the Art of going on for Ever. Mr. Swinburne on the Attractiveness of the Forbidden, and on the Melody of the English Language. Mr. Tupper on Catching a Weasel Asleep, applied to the British public. Mr. Buchanan on the Art of Self-laudation. Mr. Rossetti on the Mystery of Mediæval Mummeries; also on the Fleshly School and on the Art of Poetical Pretension. Mr. Tennyson on quite a new subject: The Yawning of Arthur; or, Guinevere Played Out.

“The students will be required to read the mortal and perishable works of some of these poets. They will also be examined in the poems of Southey, Cowper, the imitations of Pope, and the magazine poetry of the day, particularly that which decorates the monthlies.

“II. The second branch will be the writing

of essays. It is, of course, superfluous to say that A. K. H. B. will be invited to undertake the department of Commonplace and Glorified Twaddle. He will be assisted, provided their services can be secured, by the authors of the monthly magazine essays. A large number of clergymen, including the Master of the Temple and several of the bench of bishops, will be asked to instruct in reeling off 'goody' talk by the foot or yard, as required, for religious papers.

"Certain essay writers will be excluded altogether—among them will be Emerson and Oliver Wendell Holmes; while but a sparing use will be allowed of Sir Arthur Helps.

"The authors from whom cribbing will be recommended are Steele, Addison, Goldsmith, and Johnson. Montaigne will also be largely used.

"III. HISTORICAL ARTICLES.—This department is exceedingly difficult to arrange. It is hoped that Canon Kingsley may be induced to give a lecture on the Historical Forgiveness of Sins, based on that celebrated essay of his where he has shown that Raleigh's sins were forgiven because a baby was born unto him. He may also be asked to give over again his Cambridge

course. The gentleman who writes the weekly articles in the *Saturday* abusing Mr. Froude will be invited to illustrate the method of establishing a raw, and always pegging at it. He will also be asked to give a lecture on Mr. Freeman, called 'Moi et Moimême.' But the arrangements for the historical course are not yet completed, and the promoters beg for further time.

“‘IV. We come next to leading articles. On this head it will only be observed here that the paper which has the largest circulation, whatever that may be, will be chosen as the model. The *Saturday*, the *Spectator*, the *Examiner*, and a few other papers which occasionally address the intellect, will be excluded from consideration.

“‘V. The department of novels will receive the most careful attention, and the most profound study. All the students, without any exception, will be required to pass through it; and no student shall receive a degree, a diploma, or any certificate of honour, until he has produced a three-volume novel, complete, finished, and ready for the publisher. The professor of the branch should be, if he will undertake the duties, Mr. Anthony Trollope. There will be

lecturers to point out the secrets of manufacture in all the sub-divisions: the principal of these will be the religious novel, in which the works of Miss Yonge and Miss Wetherell will, of course, form the most useful guides to the student. Lord Lytton will serve for the student of the sentimental, the political, and the highly coloured unreal. There will be several forms of the muscular novel, including the rollicking, the Christian hero, the sentimental, the pint-pewter crushing, and the remorseful. Ouida, Miss Broughton, Charles and Henry Kingsley, and Mr. Lawrence, will be the chosen models for this sub-division.

“‘For the sensational, there can be but one model.

“‘For the plain work of the department, the mere storytelling, with puppets for characters, of course Mr. Wilkie Collins will be the guide.

“‘If there *should* be any student who would rashly propose to make a picture of real life, he will be set to study Charles Reade; but not in the college, from which Mr. Reade’s works will be excluded.

“The promoters will have great pleasure in receiving tenders and designs for a building.

Names of candidates will be received at once by the secretary, Mr. Hartley Venn, M.A.'

"There!" said Venn, "what do you think of that?" He sat down and wiped his forehead. "I have thought of you both. You, Lynn, shall be the standing counsel, with a large retaining fee. You, Jones, shall be professor of the dramatic art. You will observe that, out of regard to your feelings, I abstained from mentioning this department. I myself shall be the first warden, with a salary of £2,000 a year."





CHAPTER XIII.



WORLD and the two worlds of the "boys," as she called them, were all three wide enough apart. Woman-like, she tried to bring them into her own groove, and began by asking them to dinner.

Arthur went with a sort of enthusiasm. The queenly beauty and the imperiousness of the young lady—so great a contrast to his own shrinking indecision—fired his imagination. In her he saw something of what he himself might have been but for his fatal shyness. Philip went too, at first unwillingly, but presently with a pleasure which astonished him. His pastime seemed to be to rouse the spirit of antagonism in Madeleine; and he delighted to rouse her to wrath by opposing to her enthusiasm the cold barrier of cynical selfishness.

“If it were not,” she said one night—“if it were not that I know you exaggerate your opinions, I should hate you.”

“Do not hate me,” Philip answered; “because hatred is an active passion. I dislike a lot of people, but I never take the trouble to hate anybody—not even a bore.”

“Then do not talk as if self was the only thing in the world.”

“I must, Madeleine, if I talk at all. You would not have silence at your table, would you? And Arthur never says anything. Arthur has made a wonderful discovery, which is going to cover him with glory. Has he told you?”

“No. What is it, Arthur?”

Arthur blushed vividly.

"It is only a point of archæological interest," he said. "There has been a dispute in the Archæological Institute for years about the number of buttons that went to the shirt of mail, and I have at last been enabled to settle the question."

"There," said Philip, triumphantly, "what did I tell you?"

Madeleine sighed. It seemed to her so sad that one of the boys should openly worship self, and the other should fritter away his time in the pursuit of useless knowledge.

In the course of the evening she delivered an animated oration on the subject, while Mrs. Longworthy slumbered by the fire. The boys stood before her, each in his turn receiving punishment: Philip enjoying it above all things, and Arthur, because he saw that she was in earnest, with blushes and shame.

"It is all true, Madeleine, every word," he said.

"So it is," said Philip. "We are a disgraceful pair."

"You are the worse, Philip, by far," went on the fair preacher; "when I look at you, and think what you might be doing—"

"See, now, Madeleine," Philip said; "tell us exactly what we can do, and we will have a try at it. The care of other people may possibly

have a charm in it which is unknown to us at present. Who knows? I may yet be preaching on a tub, while Arthur collects halfpence in his hat. I fancy I see him now."

"You turn everything serious into ridicule," said Madeleine.

"Seriously," Arthur said, "my life is wasted. I suppose antiquarian research *is* useless to the world. I am afraid, however, I shall never quite give it up. What can I do? Do you want any money for your objects, Madeleine?"

"No — no — no," she replied, impatiently. "How often am I to tell you that the real work of charity is done without money? Now, listen, and I will tell you what a man of leisure should do. It is the interest of everybody that the condition of the poor should be raised;—by schools, by giving them instruction in the arts of life, by giving them sufficient wages for good work, by maintaining their self-respect."

Philip began to groan softly.

"I will come to what I mean most." She blushed a little, and went on:—"I have got a friend, a middle-aged woman, who gives all her life to the care of a certain house, where she receives and finds work for women. We give them as much work as they can do, at a fair

price. We ask no questions—we form no society. Some of them live in the house, others in the neighbourhood. We do not let them work all day, and we give them instruction in housework, in medicine, and all sorts of things that may be useful to them when they marry, as most of them do.”

“I suppose,” said Philip, the irrepressible, “they are driven to church three times every Sunday.”

“Not at all. We never interfere with their religion. Some of them are pious: some, I suppose, are not. We have one broad principle—that our work shall not be mixed up with religion in any way.”

“Good.”

“And what do you do with their work?”

“It goes to a shop which belongs to us. We can sell as cheaply as any other, in spite of our high wages; because, you see, there is no middle-man.”

“Madeleine, you are a Radical.”

“I know nothing about that. I am determined to do what I can to have women properly paid. All that come to me shall get work, even if we lose; though I think we shall not lose by it, so long as I have any money left. Now, you two can help me.”

"I never learned to sew," said Philip, looking at his fingers.

"The girls and women have got brothers and sons. We cannot find work for them too, but we want to get up a night school. Will you come down and teach?"

They looked at each other with alarm.

"Of course we will," said Arthur, "if you wish it."

"Then come to-morrow."

They went.

It was in Westminster that Madeleine's "house" stood: properly speaking, three or four small houses knocked into one. They went with her at seven o'clock, both feeling horribly ill at ease.

She took them upstairs into a room made out of two by taking down the wall between, where a dozen boys were assembled, under the care of a young man whose pale cheeks and thin figure concealed a vast amount of courage and enthusiasm. With him—a young martyr to the cause which yearly kills its soldiers—we have here nothing to do.

"This is our school," said Madeleine. "Mr. Hughes, these two gentlemen will try to do something for us—if you will put them in the way."

Mr. Hughes bowed—but looked suspiciously at his two new assistants.

“Come, gentlemen,” he said, “there are your pupils—the more advanced boys. Mine are down below.”

He divided the boys into two sets, one at either end; giving Philip care of one and Arthur that of the other.

“You will be firm, gentlemen,” he whispered. “Don’t let any single step be taken to destroy discipline. We have to be very careful here. Here are books for you.”

He gave Philip a geography, and Arthur a little book containing hints or lectures on all sorts of elementary subjects, chiefly connected with laws of health, rules of life, and of simple chemical laws. Arthur sat down mechanically, and turned pale when he opened the book; for of science he was as ignorant as the Pope himself. In a few moments Philip came over to him.

“What have you got, Arthur?”

“Here’s science—what am I to do with it?”

“I don’t know. I’ve got geography. What am I to do with that?”

“Draw a map on a board, and tell them something about a country. Anything will do.”

Philip went back and faced his class. They

were a sturdy, dirty-faced lot of young gamins, all whispering together, and evidently intent on as much mischief as could be got out of the new teacher. Behind him was a black board and a piece of chalk.

"What country shall we take, boys?" he asked, with an air of confidence, as if all were alike to him.

"Please, sir, yesterday we had Central Africa, and Mr. Hughes told us a lot about travellers there. Let's have some more about Livingstone."

Philip was not posted up in Livingstone. He shook his head, and tried to think of a country he knew something about. Suddenly a bright thought struck him.

"Did you ever hear of Palmiste Island, boys?"

They never had.

"By Jove," thought Philip, "I shall get on splendidly now."

As he was drawing his map of the island, he heard Arthur, in a hesitating voice, beginning to describe the glory of the heavens; and nearly choked, because he was certain that five minutes would bring him to grief.

He began to talk as he drew his map, describing the discovery of the island, the first settlers, and their hardships; and then, warming

to his subject, he told all about sugar making and coffee planting. From time to time, Arthur's voice fell upon his ear; but he was too busy drawing his map, and decorating the corners of the board with fancy sketches, illustrating the appearance of the people, niggers' heads, Chinese carrying pigs—for Phil sketched very fairly—and he did not look up. Presently he turned round. All Arthur's boys had deserted their instructor and come over to him, while their unhappy lecturer, in silence, sat helpless in his chair, book in hand. As for his own boys, they were all on the broad grin, enjoying the lesson highly.

Philip stopped—

"I say," he said, "this won't do, you know. Go back, you boys, to your own end."

"He aint no good, that teacher," said one of the boys, with a derisive grin.

Arthur shook his head mournfully. There was something touching in his attitude, sitting all alone, with his book in his hand. Perhaps Arthur had never felt so humiliated in his life before. It was perfectly true: he was no good. In the brief five minutes during which he lectured, he made more mistakes in astronomical science than generally falls to the lot of man to make in a lifetime. Some of the boys, who had

been to national schools, found him out in a moment, and openly expressed their contempt before seceding to the other end of the room.

"He aint no good, that teacher," said the boy. "You go on with your patter. We're a-listenin' to you. Draw us some more pictures. Make a white man latherin' a nigger."

"Obsairve," as a friend of ours would say, the instinctive superiority of race.

"Boys," said another, rising solemnly, "this one aint no good neither. He's a-gammonin' of us. There aint no such a place. I sha'n't stay here to be gammoned on."

He was about four feet nothing in his boots, this young Hampden. Phil, cut to the heart by the ignominy of the thing, caught him a box of the ears that laid him sprawling. The urchin raised a howl, and, falling back from his friends, pulled the form over with him, so that the whole row of a dozen fell together. The yells were terrific for a moment; and then, seized by a common impulse, the boys grasped their caps and fled down the stairs like one boy.

"Arthur!" said Philip.

"Philip!" said Arthur.

"You never experienced anything like this before, I suppose?"

"Never."

Just then Madeleine herself appeared, followed by Mr. Hughes. All the forms lay on the floor; for in the brief moment of tumult every boy had seized the opportunity of contributing something to the noise. And at either end of the room stood one of her new allies. Arthur, with his arms helplessly dangling, holding the unlucky book of science, Philip trying with his pocket-handkerchief to rub out some of the pictures.

Madeleine looked from one to the other.

"Take this wretched book, somebody," said Arthur, as if the volume chained him to the spot. "Do take the book."

Mr. Hughes took the book, and Arthur turned to Madeleine.

"It's a failure, Madeleine," he said, with a sad sigh. "They only laughed at me."

"And what have you been doing, Philip?"

"I've been getting on capitally," he said, trying to efface the pig and the Chinaman. "I've been giving a lesson on geography."

"Illustrated," said Mr. Hughes, quietly, pointing to the pig.

"Yes, illustrated. I've been telling the boys about Palmiste, Madeleine; and they actually refused to believe there is any such place."

"Is much mischief done, Mr. Hughes?" asked Madeleine.

The question was like a box on the ear to both. They looked at each other, and Philip began to laugh.

"Honestly, Madeleine," he said, "I am very sorry. We have done our best. I thought we should have to hear a lesson, and was not prepared to give a lecture."

"Never mind, sir," said Mr. Hughes. "I dare say we shall soon mend matters; and perhaps your pictures amused the children."

"You may take me home, both of you," said Madeleine.

She said no more, though she was greatly disappointed at the failure of her scheme.

"Madeleine," said Philip, in the carriage, "I am inclined to think that, on the whole, I can serve my fellow-creatures best by not teaching them."

"Try me again, Madeleine," Arthur whispered.





CHAPTER XIV.

SETTling down in most respectable lodgings, in Keppel-street, Russell-square, with a clear six months before him of no anxiety for the next day's dinner, Mr. MacIntyre felt at first more elation than becomes a philosopher. We must excuse him. When a man has had seven years of shifts, hardly knowing one day what the next would be like, racking his brain for contrivances to keep the wolf from the door, busy with never-ending combinations for the transference of cash from other people's pockets to his own, a clear holiday of six months seems almost like an eternity.

After a few days of seclusion and whisky toddy, Mr. MacIntyre awoke to the conclusion that something would have to be done. Reason

once more asserted her sway. His first idea was to take pupils; and accordingly he invested a small sum in second-hand books, another in reports and examinations, and another sum in advertisements. No pupils came at all. Another thing he did was to go to a lawyer, and instruct him to write a certain letter to a firm of lawyers in Palmiste. They were directed to search the register of marriages at the church of St. Joseph for that of George Durnford with Marie; to make a formal and attested copy of it, and to send it to London—the whole being strictly secret and confidential.

And then, this being fairly put into hand, as he found he had a good deal of time upon his hands, he began to spend it chiefly in the society of Philip, watching him closely, getting his secrets out of him, communicating his opinions, trying to get a real influence over him.

“Obsairve,” said the philosopher one night to Philip himself, “there are some kinds of men who go uphill or downhill, according as they are shoved. They have no deliberate choice in the matter; because, if they had, they would prefer the better path. While they are hesitating, some one comes and gives them a gentle shove downwards.”

“What is the meaning of all this, MacIn-

tyre?" asked Philip, ignorant of the application.

"Ay, ay—the wise man talks in parables, and is understood not. Ye've heard of Mr. Baxter, and his 'Shove to heavy Christians,' Phil? He was a sagacious man. There may as well be shovers up as shovers down. I do what I can, but it's vera little—vera little, indeed. In me, my pupil, you behold an up-shover; in yourself, —one who is shoved upwards."

In his easy way, having very few friends and long leave, Philip fell back a good deal on MacIntyre. First, the man amused him; then he took pleasure in his company, because he flattered him; thirdly, he fell into the snares of a will stronger than his own, and confided everything to him. MacIntyre, not by any means a deep, designing villain, had yet a game of his own to play. He read the character of his ex-pupil, and began to consider his own plan almost as good as carried out.

"See," he seemed to say, while he and Philip sat opposite each other in the evening, smoking and talking—"see how goodly are the fruits in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea. Let me give you a friendly shove in that direction. Obsairve, how sickly is the perfume—how faint the odour of the Jericho rose. Truly, the apples

of the plain are better than the grapes of Eshcol. I have been myself, all my life, in search of these fruits; unsuccessfully, I admit, through no fault of mine. For I had no scruples. I fought for my own hand. I was a beggar born; and, because circumstances were too strong for me, I am a beggar now, at fifty-three. But mine is the true road, and your philosopher knows no scruples."

Phil's secrets were simple. The young fellow was in debt, of course, but not badly. More than half of his little fortune was gone. He always had a heavy balance against him in his speculative transactions. Worse than this, he was in love.

All these things considered together, Mr. MacIntyre was perhaps justified in rubbing his hands at night. What did he do, though, with those two or three bits of yellow paper which he was always reading, holding to the light and examining, before he put them up again in the dirty old pocket-book which he carried inside his waistcoat?

"I think," he murmurs, "that in three months, or six at most, it may be done. It shall be done. The pear will be ripe. Bah! it must drop into my hands."

He talked over the love matter. That was the most pressing business.

"Ye cannot do it, Phil," he said—"it's beneath yourself."

"Nonsense," said Philip, colouring. "I can make no *mésalliance*."

"Pardon me, you can. And if you knew all Obsairve, young man, he who—"

"I know, I know. Do not philosophize. I suppose you cannot imagine such a thing as love, MacIntyre?"

"No, I think not. I've been married, though ; so I know very well what is *not* love."

"I believe you have been everything," said Philip.

"Most things I certainly have. And most things I have made notes of. As, for instance, that the British officer does not, as a rule, marry the girl of inferior position whom—"

"MacIntyre, stop!" cried Philip. "Do not try me too far. I have been a gambler, if you like—a profligate—anything you like to call me ; but I swear that I have never had that sin laid to my conscience."

"Aweel, aweel," said MacIntyre. "Was I tempting you? You apply a general proposition to a particular case. A most illogical race the English always were."

He changed the subject; but kept on recurring to it, night after night; while Philip, meeting Laura but once a week or so, was daily growing more and more passionately in love with the girl.

"A marriage beneath your station, Philip," he said one night, enigmatically, "would be madness to you, just now."

"And why just now?"

"Because you will have to take your proper place; give up the soldiering, and become a country gentleman—that is, as soon as you like to hold out your hand and ask."

"What is the man talking about?"

"Never mind—we can wait. Mind, I say nothing about the young leddy."

"She is too good for me."

"Na doot—na doot. They always are. She's all that you imagine, of course, and more behind it. But after a month, ye'd wish ye hadn't done it. Eh, what a pity that there is nothing short of marriage! Hand-fasting would be something."

It was the second time he had thrown out this hint. This time Philip did *not* spring from his chair. He only looked at him thoughtfully, and shook his head.

"I must have her, MacIntyre—I must have

her. Only this morning I saw her. See, here is a lock of her pretty hair. How soft it is, the dear little lock that I cut off with her own scissors! And here is her face in my locket. Look at it—you, with your fifty years of cold philosophy—and warm your blood for a moment. Think of what you would have been, if you had met her when you were young, when you were five and twenty! Eh, Mephistopheles? Did you ever have any youth?"

"I'll tell you about my youth some other day," returned the preceptor—"not now. Well, it's a bonny face, a bonny face; and a good face, too."

"By Heaven, sir," Philip went on, "there's no woman like her—not one.

‘There is none like her, none,

Nor shall be till our summers have deceased.’

You know, you know—

‘Her sweet voice ringing up to the sunny sky,

Till I well could weep for myself, so wretched and
mean,

And a lover so sordid and base.’

It isn't quite right: but never mind. I feel the touch of her fingers in mine this moment, man of the icy veins. I tell you that I feel the warm blush on her cheek when I kissed her; I hear the sweet tones of her voice—the loveliest and

sweetest you ever heard. And she trusts me," he went on, with a sort of sob—"she trusts me, and thinks I am good. Good! She is not happy with the secret, poor child. She longs to tell this Mr. Venn, who is a friend of Arthur's, all about it."

"And has she told Mr. Venn?" cried MacIntyre, greatly excited.

"Why, no. I tell her not to."

"Don't let her, Phil. Keep it secret. Whatever you do, don't let Mr. Venn know."

Phil was in a hot fit that night, and MacIntyre let him down with his simple remonstrance.

Next day he was despondent, because things looked badly for a horse he had backed. He began again. Philip answered, surlily—

"I am going to marry her, pillar of Presbyterian scrupulosity. My mind is made up."

"I knew a man once," said MacIntyre, filling his tumbler with brandy and water, "much in your predicament. He was in love with a girl beneath him."

"Now you are going to invent some lies of your own," said Philip.

MacIntyre half rose.

"Sir, do not insult your own guest. If it was not for—for this full glass of grog, I'd go at once."

"No, no—I beg your pardon. Go on with your parable."

"It is no parable. Truth, sir—plain, unvarnished truth, will always be found better than parable. This, sir," tapping his breast, "is a wholesale dépôt of truth. I knew the man of whom I am telling you well. A friend of his had been once an ordained Presbyterian minister. He said to him, 'I will marry you privately. The marriage is pairfectly good north of the Tweed. What it is south, I do not know. It will be time to raise the question after the ceremony is completed.' Well, Philip, they were married. My friend performed the service in his own house. The question has never been raised, and never will be raised, because the marriage turned out happily—in consequence of the demise of the leddy."

"Is that true?" Philip asked.

"Quite true. I was the man who married them."

Mr. MacIntyre's powers of fiction are already too well known for me to waste any time in comment upon this speech. No tear, I have reason to believe, blotted that falsehood from the paper where it was taken down.

"I was the man," said Alexander the Great without a blush.

"Were you ever in orders—you?" asked Phil.

"I—why not? I was ordained, called, set aside, whatever you call it. It is true that I was young and inexperienced."

"Good Lord, what a man it is!"

"I began by preaching in Edinburgh; but I failed in my very first appearance. They said I wanted unction. I don't know what I wanted. I had learned my discourse by heart the day before. Unfortunately, I took too much on the Saturday night; and in the morning, what with the whisky and what with the position, and the sermon half forgotten, I fear I made but a poor appearance in the pulpit, a sort o' stickit minister. I never preached there again."

"What did you do next?"

"They wanted a missionary for the Jews in Constantinople. I went there. I stayed seven years. I converted three Jews, who, as I afterwards found, had been converted by all my predecessors in turn. They did not cost much; and as their names were always changed, they helped to make up the quarterly report. However, I had to give that work up; and I believe my three converts all relapsed. Eh! the hundreds of pounds those three rascals cost our country. I say nothing, Phil; but you will think over my parable, as you please to call it. Mind,

I believe the marriage was pairfectly legal. You may find out, afterwards, whatever you please. Remember, the Church of Scotland is not yet disestablished. It is as respectable as your own Church."

"Truly," said Philip, saluting him.

"I say, sir," repeated the reverend divine, "it is as respectable as yours. Otherwise, I should not be in it."

"Quite so," said Philip—"quite so."

"My friend, you see," he went on, "argued thus, by my advice: 'If I choose, I can at any time investigate the question of legality. On the other hand, my wife will always believe herself married. There will be no question of a very ugly word, because the Church will have done her part. A blessed thing it is, Philip, that there is a Church to protect the world.'"

He stopped for a moment, and took a sip of half a pint or so of brandy and water. Then his speech became suddenly thick.

"A real-a-tooll-a 'lessed 'spensation of Providence. What that friend of mine, in love and all with most beautiful creech', would have done withou' th' Church, impossible to say." He steadied himself with an effort. "Phil, my dear boy, brandy always makes me ill. Gi' me a ma' hat, ye blettherin' deevil, telling your stories,

and keeping your old tutor out of bed. Gi' me ma hat, and le' me go. I'll tell ye the rest to-morrow."

Philip, left alone, began to meditate. The evil suggestion of his tempter lay at his heart like a seedling waiting to put forth its leaves. There was, over and above the other difficulties of the position, that of living if he were to marry. A very considerable slice of the five thousand was gone, that was quite clear. About the rest he was not quite clear, but there could not be much.

"What matters?" he murmured. "I will sell out, and we will do something—love like the birds, by gad. But I must and will have the girl."

He took out the locket again, and looked at the face which lay in it, with its bright, innocent smile. As he looked, his face softened.

"It is a shame," he said, "a shame. That scoundrel, MacIntyre. No, child, no. I will never wrong you."

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